
DR RUDGE'S
INCREASE OF POPULATION

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INCREASE OF POPERY.

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INCREASE OF POPERY.

BY

JAMES RUDGE, D.D.



“Many of the Popes of Rome have fallen into heresies and errors.”
Declaration made at the Council of Basil.

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1839

DEDICATION.

TO

THOMAS TURTON, D.D.

*Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge,
and Dean of Peterborough.*

Hawkchurch Rectory,
New-Year's Day, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

As some small token of my admiration and esteem, as well as some very inadequate return for the gratification and improvement with which I have read your late volume in reference to Dr. Wiseman, as also your work on Natural Theology, I presume to dedicate to you my little publication, "*The Increase of Popery in England.*" Your answer to Dr. Wiseman is admirably calcu-

lated, as much to refute the errors and expose the sophistry of Papists, as to settle the convictions and to satisfy the judgments of Protestants; and I am quite sure that it must have produced at Rome the effect mentioned in one of the friendly letters with which you have lately favoured me.

There is one point upon which it is probable you may not concur with me in opinion—the necessity of passing the Relief Bill, after the Test Laws, &c., had been swept away from the statute-book. I thought then, as I think now, that the Minister of the day, whose foresight and judgment cannot, surely, be too highly appreciated (see Gurwood's volumes, *passim*), had no other course to pursue but the one he was compelled to adopt, not from the dread of a civil war, but from the *supineness and negligence of the members of the Protestant communion*, as to the conservation of those laws; and to them and to them alone must the blame and the evil consequences attach. *το αἷμα ἐρ' αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῶν.* It may be going against the stream of the latitudinarian spirit and the spurious liberality of the present age to say so; but it is neither the imputation of bigotry, nor the shout of shame—

shame, which would ever deter me from entertaining in private, or from declaring in public, my conviction, that those conservative embankments, which were thrown up by the foresight, and suggested by the piety, of our forefathers, ought never to have been removed. These things, however, are now matters of history, upon which the men of our times, and those who shall follow us, will think differently. One thing is quite certain, the Papists, who have never slumbered, are now all activity and zeal; and if Protestants shall follow their example and shake off their lethargy, I, for one, entertain no doubt as to the result.

The Protestant's motto should now be, Nil actum reputans, siquid superesset agendum; and their chief, if not their only wall, to which they have now to trust—esto impenetrabilis!—is *their own selves*—their own personal, energetic, and unrelaxed exertions in maintaining their principles, and in defending their Church against all who assail that Church from without, or all who from *within* daub it with the untempered mortar of semi-papistical notions and observances!

That labours so serviceable as yours may be continued to the great and glorious cause in which

Protestant Ministers should now be engaged, whether their station be high, or their situation be secluded ; and that a life so valuable may for years be preserved, both as a blessing to the University, of which you have long been one of its chief ornaments, and to that pure and apostolical branch of CHRIST'S Catholic Church—the Church of England and Ireland, of which you have proved yourself one of its ablest champions, is at this season the appropriate prayer, and at all times the fervent wish of,

My dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful servant,

JAMES RUDGE.

ON THE

INCREASE OF POPERY

IN ENGLAND.

THE number of chapels in which the authority of the Pope is acknowledged, and the tenets of Popery are promulgated, is, it is alleged, daily increasing. Of the perfect accuracy with which this representation is made, I, of course, am unable to write from my own knowledge and observation; but from sources to which I have lately had access, I have reason to believe that there is some foundation for the statement respecting this increase. In *Laity's Directory*—a work published under the sanction of the Vicar-Apostolical of London (Dr. Griffiths),* it is stated, that, in one district, that of Moorfields—a locality with which I happen to be well acquainted, embracing Hackney, Whitechapel,

* *Laity's Directory*, authorized by us,

✂ THOMAS GRIFFITHS, V. A. L.

The object of this Directory, among other matters, is to give an account of the Church Service for 1838, and under the article “Plenary Indulgences,” the *faithful are directed*, for some space of time each day, to pray to God for the *conversion of heretics*, and for the free propagation of the Holy Faith.

Limehouse, &c., having resided within it for twenty years—the increase in the population of persons belonging to the Roman Communion has been from five to thirty thousand since the commencement of the present century ;* and in the *Catholic Magazine*, of which I have read several recent numbers, records are given, from time to time, of the number of chapels which have been erected, and of those which are now building. Since writing the above, I have read in my paper (the *Times*), an extract from *Blackwood's Magazine*, on this subject, from which it would appear, that the increase in the number of chapels, and in the population of Papists, has been swelled within these few years, to an extent of which I believe no member of the Protestant community has the most distant idea, and which, *if true*, may well give rise to serious reflections, if not to serious alarm. It states that there are twenty-one peers,† besides several baronets,‡ who belong to the Romish Church ; that the Romish Chapels

• This increase may, in a great measure, be ascribed to the erection of the Docks, in which so many Irish labourers are employed. I know it is the case in the West India Docks, in which, through my friend, Captain Parish, the principal Dock Master, I used to get employment for many poor Irish Catholics.

† The names of the peers are—Norfolk, Shrewsbury, Fingall, Newburgh, Petre, Stourton, Stafford, Arundel, Vaux, Clifford, Dormer, Lovat, Traquair, Kenmore, Gormanston, Southwell, Frankfort, Trimlestown, Louth, Dunboyne, and French.

‡ Some of the names of the baronets—Throckmorton,

have actually been increased, since 1792, from thirty to five hundred and nineteen; that others are now being built, and that the population of Papists in Great Britain at this moment amounts to nearly *two millions!!* What inference do I draw from this statement? What is the train of reflection in which it leads me to indulge? Why, that now that the mounds and embankments by which the ascendancy of Protestant principles was guarded and maintained, and the rush and despotism of Popish dogmas were, if not altogether prevented, to a great degree checked, have been thrown down, the subject is one which must command, at the present moment, a prominent interest and importance in the breast of every reflecting member of the Protestant community. Those mounds and embankments, there can be no question, exercised a salutary controul and influence during the period in which they were permitted to remain; but it having been thought by wiser men than myself, that the time had at length arrived in which their retention was no longer necessary as a safeguard to Protestant principles:—nor do I remember to have heard, for I was in the House of Lords at the time, a single word or argument adduced against their removal—there could be no sense or justice in withholding any longer from the Romanists the civil rights, of which their Protestant brethren had been in the enjoyment since the period of the Reforma-

Gerard, Stanley, Haggerston, Blount, Hunloke, Wolseley, Tichbourne, Constable, Mostyn, Vincent, Gage, Bedingfield, Lawson, Smythe, Swinbourne, Vavasour, &c. &c.

tion ; and the one is now on an equality with the other in the possession of religious and civil immunities. The Romanist can now sit on the same benches with the Protestant in both Houses of Parliament ; the road to the honours and dignities of the state is now nearly open alike to both, and each can worship with the sanction of law, and without let or hindrance, the one from the other, in their own houses of prayer, and according to their own forms of devotion. Emancipation is no longer a watchword of party ; it offers no fuel now for angry disputation and exasperated feeling, either on the one side or the other. Both may now sit down and live together in unity as brethren, *if they like*. And it was right that the olive branch of peace should have been plucked, and that the boon should have been conceded, and the measure should have passed, *the moment in which* it was adjudged politic and advisable to *throw down* the Protestant landmarks, or, in other words, that what was intended originally as such, the *Test-laws*, should be expunged from the national code, or statute-book. This was my opinion at the time, and it remains unchanged. As to any pacification that it would bring to Ireland, or any benefit that would accrue to the mass of the people, for whose amelioration the outcry was made, the thing was a mere dream, and could only delude such as were in a dream. And events have proved how perfectly inoperative was the measure in quelling the turbulent, and in silencing the agitating spirits that are the bane and curse of that distracted portion of the

British empire, but for whom peace would knit together the hearts, and plenteousness cover the hills and valleys of Ireland, where a resident gentry would be allowed to live in safety, and diffuse around the blessed influences of good example and kind attentions. Still, I say, if it has wrought no good, it behoves the members of the Protestant community to be on their guard that it perpetrates no evil on the religious and civil institutions of their father land. To show the sort of feeling with which the measure of Emancipation is now regarded, I need only quote the following passage from a recent number of a Magazine, published monthly by the Romanists:—
“Cerberus has had many sops presented to him of late, but that given by the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, in 1829, to calm the fears of the bigots for the religious orders, must certainly take precedence in the category of those legislative acts, superlatively distinguished by the name of humbug.” Still, I confess, I do not participate in the fears and apprehensions entertained by some as to the result, even should the number of Popish chapels* be multiplied to a much greater extent than is vaunted in this publication, and in other works under Popish controul and patronage. But yet, I say, let the laity and clergy of the Protestant communion be at their post, and let the efforts put forth, and the display

* It is gratifying to add, that within the last twenty years nearly 1500 Protestant churches and chapels have been built. The increase of Popish chapels is no proof whatever of the increase of Popery in England: and I very much question whether there has been much, if any increase at all, up to this moment.

now made by their adversaries, be met by correspondent exertions and by increased activity on their parts. Neutrality now is a crime—inactivity now must and will be the Protestants' grave! If there be any impending evil, let it at once be manfully and gallantly encountered. The call of the times is,—“Be up, and be doing!” And wo and lamentation be ours, if, when the bitter foe, who now has leagued himself in unnatural confederacy with ultra-radicals and political dissenters, be at our doors, we fold our arms in stupid slumber, or rest our oars on those turbid waters which *make a noise*, and rage and swell around us. We Protestants have to deal with a subtile and proselyting foe, and depend upon it we may, that every engine will be put in requisition, by which it may be thought that good will be done to their cause; and every mode of insinuation and policy will be adopted, by which Protestant fears may be lulled, and Protestant prejudices may be allayed. Nor will misrepresentation as to the characters who have figured, as well as the scenes which have been enacted in times past, be the least of the artifices to which recourse will be had, in order to quiet suspicion and remove alarm. The very streams of history will be polluted, and historical facts be distorted, the better to accomplish their purpose and to attain their end. Be we, then, on our guard; and let us be so accomplished in the study of history, and in the knowledge of past transactions recorded in its pages, as that we may be enabled to grapple with

every mis-statement that may be made, and to tear the veil from every distorted narrative that we find.*

Among the most prominent and malignant distortions of the kind may be mentioned those respecting good Queen BESS and her times. The memory of that truly illustrious and iron-hearted woman is deservedly dear to Protestant bosoms : but, to weaken the hold she retains, and ever must retain, in the affections and love of every sound member of the Protestant communion, the columns of newspapers, and the pages of magazines, under Popish influence, and even the graver chapters of history, are employed to blacken her memory ; and every little apocryphal anecdote is raked up among the rubbish of court-gossip, or *la chronique scandaleuse*, to lower the colossal dignity of her character, and to level it down into that of some mere ordinary, weak, and frivolous woman. ELIZABETH, indeed, like all other great personages who have figured in the annals of time and in the pages of history, had, in common with them, her weaker points ; but to the very bone she was a queen in might and majesty ; and she seemed to have been raised up by the providence of God as one, in the nobly redeeming parts of her character, just suited to the times in which she lived, and well qualified by

* Among the misrepresentations, not wilful perhaps, which we should guard against, not the least is that which we often hear from the lips of some benevolent members of the Romish communion, as to the tenets, &c., of their Church. The *lex Scripta* and historical facts are stubborn things, and are the only source from which accurate views are to be formed of the real character and the true doctrines of that communion.

temper, and nerve, and education, to take in hand and perfect the momentous work which chiefly illustrated the *era* of her sovereignty over us ! She did more, by her wisdom and resolution, for the settlement and maintenance of Protestant principles, than any who preceded or followed after her : and hence it is no difficult matter to understand the obloquy with which her character is assailed, and her memory is treated, by those who feel, at this moment, the astonishing influence of the one, and the much-cherished love of Protestants towards the other ;—why her petty weaknesses as a woman are magnified, and her noblest and most magnificent deeds as a Queen are distorted. But in vain :—for as long as a particle of true British blood flows in our veins, and a spark from that candle, which our Protestant forefathers lighted, continues to be unspent and unextinguished, we shall hold the memory of our good Queen Bess in such veneration and regard, as no taunts can weaken, no defamation can blacken, and no time shall efface !

In despite, then, of all these arts and machinations, I still retain the opinion, that we have nought to fear, if we will but be true to ourselves and to our principles. It is my firm conviction, that the people of England (I include under that term, the peers, the gentry, and the commonalty of the land), would sooner see their fields saturated with the blood of their countrymen, and the worst and most destructive of fires—the fire of civil warfare, rekindled, rather than witness and tolerate the re-introduction and the re-establishment

of Popery amongst them, under its present arbitrary form and character: and I, who have hitherto whispered “peace, peace,” should be one of the first to join in the cry of “war, war,” if any open and daring attempt should be made “to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down,”* those civil and religious institutions, in the building and planting of which our forefathers expended so much of their valuable labours, and shed so much of their precious blood. But its re-establishment I think is impossible, so long as the liberty of the press shall be unshackled, the diffusion of knowledge shall be unchecked, and the study and the reading of God’s word be uninterrupted. These and Popery are incompatible: they never can co-exist. But our best hopes are on a Rock that is higher than we—even on a just, and equitable, and all-powerful God. The Popish system never can prevail against us, and for this plain and palpable reason—it has not truth for its base. It is bottomed in error, and supported by fraud; and being alike hostile to human freedom of thought and action, and to Christian simplicity and truth, it cannot effloresce, if I may so write, any more amongst us. It is not a tree of the Lord’s, full of the precious sap. A gaudy foliage may continue for a time to attract the eye; but the root of

* It may not, perhaps, be generally known, but the fact is so, that the Bishop of Rome has, from these words of Jeremiah, arrogated to himself the right of dethroning kings and subverting kingdoms; and not only claimed, but has exercised the power of doing so.

the tree has no soundness or vitality in it. It surely cannot thrive. Will not the LORD of the whole earth do right? And is it to be presumed that He will sanction by his authority, and support with his grace, a system, which has not truth for its basis, and which substitutes for the clear commandments of God the erring traditions and ordinances of men? And there is another reason, too, which strengthens my conviction that such a system can never more prevail amongst us; and it is this—Can the ALMIGHTY be supposed to approve of that monstrous alliance which Papists have formed of late with Radicals and Infidels, and schismatics of every varying hue and character in this the 19th century; they who, in the 16th century, suffered so much from, and in principles were so much opposed to, Reform and Reformers? Against such an union, Heaven surely must forbid the banns, and never permit from such an adulterous connexion any thing to be generated but the spawn of confusion, and the abortions of nature. Must not such inconsistency strike every reflecting observer? And is such the agency of which a God of purity and order can approve, and the people of England think favorably? Can good result from such evil communications, and a cause be permitted to prosper which has for its abettors the riotous spirits of Molock, and the impure worshippers of Belial? Can such inconsistency—but no, I will not mince the appropriate term—can such wickedness prevail? My opinion is, that the Papists, by such an impolitic and unholy alliance have dug their own graves, and have

been the suicides of their own cause. Nor do I think that the Dissenters have done themselves much good by having allowed themselves to be drawn into such a confederacy with a grasping and overbearing ally, who would crush them the moment their point had been gained, and kick from beneath them the ladder, by which they had been enabled to ascend to the object of their ambition, and the landing point of all their machinations and schemes. By lending themselves as the allies and agents of the Papists, the Dissenters have not only *not done* themselves any good—they have done themselves positive harm. They have rendered their protestations of liberality suspicious, and have estranged from them many a conscientious layman and clergyman, who, before the cloven foot had been discovered, were at all times ready to unite with them in all their schemes of benevolence, and in all their labours of love; and, if I am not much mistaken, two or three centuries will elapse before they recover the ground they have lost. A man, who conscientiously differs from me on some points of doctrine, or on some matters of discipline, I can honour—but that honour I must withhold from those *political* Dissenters, who have courted the alliance of Papists, and whose deadly hostility to the Established Church is now no longer a suspicion that might have been heretofore entertained by some, but is a matter of fact that is known unto all. Events *within the last ten years* have sufficiently opened men's eyes on the subject.*

* It is a pleasure to record, that, notwithstanding the attacks to which the Church of England has been subjected, it never

Still, however, I am led to the conclusion, that we have nought to fear in the battle, if the battle is to be fought. But we must be at our posts now-a-days, and be ready, above all, to hurl the torch of disunion from us, should the subtle and deadly foes of our ecclesiastical establishment and of our free institutions throw it into our camp ; for we have more to fear from *that* torch, than from all the fire and artillery of our open adversaries. We have hitherto, it cannot be disguised, been lying too much on our oars ; and the thought that all was safe, and that all was plain sailing ; and that there were no rocks and shoals, and gales and tempests near, has rendered us supine and listless, and caused us to be too much at our ease. To use a nautical phrase, we have lost way ; and by our neglect in not having carried sufficient canvas, we have suffered one

stood higher in public estimation than it does at the present moment : and of this we may be assured, *as a fact*, that there is a strong *leaning* towards it on the part of the poor. They have sense enough to see, that no other communion can compete with it, either in the respectability of its character, or the liberality of its views. It is indeed the *poor man's Church*, and as such, the convenience and accommodation of the poor should never be lost sight of for a moment. They pay nothing for their attendance, nor should a shilling be ever demanded from them in any shape whatsoever. The want of church room, has ever been one of the crying evils. Go on, adding and adding to the number of churches, and secure the services of pains-taking and diligent clergymen in each, and the poor will be with the church to a certainty, however some may be drawn aside by the love of singularity, and by the itching propensity in others to hear some new preacher, or listen to some new-fangled theory or doctrine.

at least of our foes, if not to get a head, to follow close in our wake. Yet, notwithstanding, we may even now recover by our vigilance what we have lost by our indolence ; and the race and the victory may be ours, if we will—to drop the figure—if we will but go on, with invigorated strength and activity, to build additional places of worship—to instruct more and more the ignorant, filling their *hearts*, and *not their heads*, with sound wisdom and saving knowledge, and laying the foundation deep in habits of industry—to circulate more and more God's word, and to sow the wholesome and precious seed in a hundred-fold degree in the affections of our inhabitants of towns, and of our residents in villages. Our motto should be the motto both of our laity and clergy—*magis, magisque*. We must out-vie in our zeal, and out-do in our labours, the zeal and labours of all our adversaries ; and not grudgingly and sparingly, but liberally and freely, employ each and all of these instruments of religious and moral usefulness I have enumerated. And then, once more I repeat, as to the final result, our alarms may be quieted, and our apprehensions be dismissed. Our triumph will be complete, and, like the myrtle, the more it is rubbed, the greater the fragrance of its leaves. Our enemies, however leagued and banded together, like the Midianites, and Ishmaelites, and Edomites of old, will not be able to do us violence, nor approach to hurt, either ourselves or our religious and civil establishments. They may merge their differences and unite their forces for one

combined assault and one common object; but the Lord of Hosts will be with us—the God of Jacob will be our refuge, and be as a wall of brass—*murus athenus*—to defend us; and He will do unto these confederated and heterogeneous masses and allies* as he did to Sisera and Jabin at the river of Kishon, and at the city of Endor—He will mow them down like thistles, and cast them before the wind as stubble!

I have not touched on any of the peculiar tenets of the Romish communion. I have formed my own judgment upon each of them; and after a long, and a calm, and candid examination of every work of authority in which they are detailed and recommended, the conclusion at which I have arrived is this, that they have no claims whatsoever to our belief, for the best and simplest of all reasons, that the Bible is against them, as much in the letter of its commandments, as in the spirit of its doctrines. And this is the only point after all, to which all investigations must verge. Books may be multiplied, and controversies be maintained, but, what saith the Scripture, not what saith the Church of Rome, is the main—the only question? If the dogmas of that church are to be at all put in competition with, or to supersede, or to weigh

* The Dissenters, in 1662, acted a more consistent part than the Dissenters of our day; they refused to associate with the Papists, though in common with them they were aggrieved by the act of uniformity. They kept aloof from those whom they knew to be as much the foes of themselves as they were the enemies of the Church.

down the authority of the Written Word, there is, at once, an end of all argument—of all private conversation, and public controversy on the subject. The question is settled, as far at least as the belief and judgment of Protestants are concerned. Tradition, which is the corner-stone of the Popish superstructure, is no article of the Protestant's creed. "Whatsoever things are written, those only are believed; and believed because they were *written* for his learning," that through them, and them only—the Scriptures—his hopes may be enlarged, his mind comforted, his patience settled, and his faith consolidated. As to oral communications respecting the past—always an uncertain, and often a suspicious medium of conveying information—he rejects and repudiates them. He regards it as a senseless thing to deliver unwritten traditions, when all that is necessary for his faith and obedience were to be committed to writing, and were exhibited in the Gospels of the Evangelists, or in the Epistles of the Apostles. The Apostles, it is true, might have enjoined some things which they had *delivered* by word of mouth to be remembered until such time as they were able to commit them to writing, and became the *lex scripta* of believers. But let it be borne in mind, that there is a wide difference between what the Apostles did, and the Church of Rome does—the former were inspired, the latter is not. The Bible, and nothing but the Bible, has authority to influence the faith, and command the obedience, of a Protestant. He claims the exercise

of *private judgment*, and the right of searching the Scriptures to see, whether what is propounded as an article of faith, be agreeable to their spirit, and conformable to their directions. His reason, therefore, cultivated by education and enlightened by Scripture, is employed on the subject, and to no man, nor to any body of men, whether a conclave of cardinals or an assembly of divines, will he surrender its exercise. The moment in which he does so, he would cease to be an *accountable* being to his God, to whom he deems, on the authority of the written Word, that a representation must to him hereafter be given of the manner in which this distinguishing talent of man has been occupied. When, then, he is told to receive *this* or *that* as an article of belief, his answer is, "Yes; if it has the warrant of Scripture.—No; if otherwise." I must be forced to think for myself, and not to let others think for me; for that would be to make over and surrender my judgment to others, and to forego the exercise of that mental and intellectual power by which I am guided and distinguished from the instincts of brutes that perish. I PROTEST against all interdiction and interference of man, and I cannot better express what I feel than in the language of the 20th article of the Church, to which, *ex imo pectore*, I belong, "It is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word *written*, nor enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation." And, as to General Councils, as expressed in the next article, 21st, "They have neither strength

nor authority, unless the things ordained be taken out of Holy *Scripture*." Now, by this warrantry, and this alone, I abide. A Papist may ask me to believe in images, shrines, relics, amulets, beads, in the efficacy of holy water, and in the sign of the cross, and in other things *ejusdem generis*, in the sale of indulgences, and in the absolutions of the priests—absolutions which offer a premium for the perfidy of the mind, and the violation of oaths and promises, and, in short, make them of non-effect. As a Protestant, I object, that these have no authority from God's Word *written*. I therefore withhold my belief. He may ask me to believe in the Virgin Mary,* as a mediatrix, or goddess, to be worshipped as "the Queen of Heaven," as "the fountain of grace," as "the refuge of sinners," "the comfort of the afflicted," and as "the

* There is something remarkable in the *reserve* of the written Word respecting the Virgin Mary; and if any inference be drawn from that reserve, the proper one surely is, that she never was intended to be an object of adoration. The Scripture is expressively *silent* as to any invocation being made, or any worship being paid her. Her name occurs only but in three or four passages; and on no one occasion upon which she appears, is there any thing written or done by which any authority can be drawn for that idolatrous and superstitious adoration of her which obtains in the Church of Rome. It is singular, too, that her name is not once mentioned, where, if anywhere, we should have expected to have found it, in the Epistles. If invocation is to be made, and grace to be dispensed, they are only to be through Jesus Christ; such is the doctrine of *Scripture*.

advocate of Christians ;” all of which are terms found in the Romish ritual, and applied and believed by all Papists. As no such attributes are given, and no such descriptions are found in the Scriptures respecting her, and are preposterous as appropriated to any *created being*, as was the Virgin Mother, I withhold my belief. There is but one Mediator between God and man—CHRIST JESUS ; and in his mediation—in the efficacy of his advocacy, and the all-sufficiency of his atonement, I do believe, because it is expressly revealed in terms so significant, in language so clear, and in passages so frequent, that no sophistry can elude, and no scepticism can invalidate, the all-important doctrine. In the mediation of the other I do not believe, because there is not one text of the written Word—not one scintilla of proof, by which the claim can be admitted, and the mediation be authorized. I may be asked to acquiesce in the Popish dogma of the worship of angels and the intercession of saints, of which the Romish ritual has one for every particular day, and one for the cure of every specific disease. It is contrary to God’s Word written—the worship of the one, or the invocation of the other. From these, therefore, my belief is equally withholden. And next, *instar omnium*, my belief may be claimed for the doctrine of the real presence, or of transubstantiation,* or of the change of the

* It is really not worth while to expend any words in the refutation of this monstrous doctrine. It is equally against the plainest sense of Scripture, and the practice even of the Church of Rome, for more than a thousand years after

simple elements of the water and the bread into the substantial body and identical blood of Jesus Christ, *once*, and *once only*, offered and shed as a full, perfect, and *sufficient* sacrifice for the sins and transgressions of the whole world. It is contrary to God's Word written, and repulsive to every exercise of the reason of a reflecting and intellectual being: and if I am a sceptic as to other dogmas, I am, in a superlative degree so, a sceptic as to this outrage on the understanding, and this insult on the faith, sober and rational, of a Christian. I can, in conclusion, do no better than adopt the language of a good man, and bless my God that I breathe in a pure air, free from the noisome and pestilent fogs of these superstitious vanities, where none of these fooleries and impieties are obtruded on my faith and practice; that I live in a church, wherein no other name is invoked but the name of GOD the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; nor divine worship given to any but to the one true God, through JESUS CHRIST, the only Mediator.

Such are the words which I have put into the mouth, and which I apprehend would contain the answer and objections of any one, were he asked to believe in these tenets of the Romish Church. And I conclude, from all that has been said, that there is not anything, in *any one* of her peculiar dogmas, which would lead to the

the death of Christ. It was introduced by one of the Popes (Innocent III.), in the year 1215, and before the Council of Lateran. No Papist was required to receive it as an article of faith.

belief, that they ever can become again articles of popular acceptance with the people of England ; and, therefore, on that ground there is really nothing to awaken apprehension, and justify alarm. The entertainment of such fears is almost an insult to the understandings of an educated and reflecting people. Educated, did I say ? Yes ; the work of education must, to use a transatlantic phrase, *progress* : and it must be grounded on *Scriptural truth*, and guided and sanctified by Christian principles, or education will be an engine of mischief rather than an instrument of usefulness ; and the truths of the Bible, sown carefully and judiciously in the affections, will be the best preservatives against the inoculation of error, and the infections of a corrupt, superstitious, and anti-Christian hierarchy ! Do I apply the term *superstitious* to the Romish hierarchy ? I do not indeed characterise *that* as superstition, which leads a member of the Romish Synagogue to be transported even beyond measure by the sight of any object venerable for its age and sanctity—say, for instance, St. Peter's at Rome ;—that splendid and magnificent structure, wherein, according to the vivid and highly-wrought imagination of Byron, are *aisled*—

“———— Majesty,
Power, glory, strength, and beauty.”

Or to the representation of Ariasto :—

Siede un Templo il piu bello e meglio adorno
Che vede il Sol fra quanto gira intorno.

But I should characterize those emotions as supersti-

tious, if any portion of the feelings, by which he was overpowered, was connected with the idolatrous worship of the Cross of Bronze on the obelisk, in which is enclosed, according to the popular credulity, the very identical cross of wood, or rather a particle of it, on which the Saviour of mankind lingered, and fainted, and gave up the Ghost, as an oblation and sacrifice for the world's transgressions and sins! I have not unfrequently attended the services of the Romish Church in countries, in which the Roman was the dominant faith, and to which, therefore, the term *Catholic* might be applied with, perhaps, strict propriety; and I remember one occasion, in particular, on which was commemorated the anniversary day of the titular Saint of the Church where I happened to be present at Antwerp. It is quite out of the power of language to convey the faintest idea of this particular act of religious worship—at least I have no descriptive powers in which I could embody, in accurate and appropriate terms, what my eyes saw or my ears heard. Imagine a structure, which, for magnificence of design and grandeur of execution, could be surpassed but by few. And there were then therein, engaged in the holy service, to which such a temple should alone be consecrated, a number of between sixty and seventy priests, all, with their bishop, arrayed in their most costly and gorgeous vestments. The fumes of incense were diffused around, filling the sanctuary with its fragrance. There was a breathless attention paid by the worshippers—the devotion of all seemed warm and fervent; and if I saw occasionally a countenance,

a female one in particular, it appeared to be perfectly absorbed and abstracted from all terrene concerns and cares ; and if the eye were the real unequivocal index of the heart, there was but one object there on which all the feelings and affections were centered—the worship of the place and the elevation of the host ; but never, above all, shall I forget the concord of sweet sounds which vibrated on the ear, and thrilled throughout the whole of the frame. I felt at the moment, in the language of Scott, “ that there was here less of earth—more of heaven ;” and could I have closed my eyes, and had but ears to hear only, I could have mused but on the endearing scenes, the green pastures, the calm delights, and the adoring objects of that celestial world to which such harmonious sounds and such sweet music tended to elevate the affections, and to uplift the soul, and to remind one only of the chorus of angels, and the anthem of spirits, blessed and purified from the dross of earthly cravings and desires. Yes : this was the hour of the power and magic of music over the soul ; but when its heaven-inspiring notes had subsided and died away, then succeeded the hour of reflection, of calm and serious musing ; and when I looked around and thought on all the solemn trifling and mummary with which certain portions of this gorgeous ceremonial were conducted, I could not withhold from myself the conclusion, that all I saw was but the *re-acting*, in part, in a Christian sanctuary, of the splendours of the Jewish Synagogue, and the rites of the Roman Pantheon, with both of which it vied in the multitude of its ceremonies and the

gorgeousness of its services : and how alien the whole, indeed, from the perfect purity and simplicity of that worship which the humility of the Gospel inculcates in every page, and the unostentatious and unpretending character of its founder illustrated, as well in every word he spoke as in every work he performed ! It is the object of the Church of England to maintain this simplicity, and to combine in the administration of its public services as few forms and ceremonies as possible ; and, in my judgment, the more Christian worship is simplified and cleansed of outward splendour, the better, and the more conformable it will be to the primitive standard—to what, in fact, that standard continued to be in the four first centuries, and before even the name of Popery was known ;—before the Church of Rome had advanced its arrogant claims of supremacy, and had sacrificed to outward pomp and parade the real dignity and genuine simplicity of public worship. To dispense with forms altogether is quite impossible ; for order, and for edification's sake, a few must be observed : and here I think the Church of England has hit upon the happy mean, avoiding pomp and splendour on the one hand, and the utter absence of forms and discipline on the other. On this subject it may be as well to add a few words, in order that we may see the more clearly what the forms of the Church, and the character and administration of her services, in reality are. The members of her communion, in every town and village, attend their respective parish churches at the hours appointed for public worship. At

the usual times at which the morning and evening prayers commence, there appear in the reading-desks the officiating minister of each particular church, apparelled in *white* garments ; to the simple and unobtrusive character of which, no person of a real piety and of a discriminating judgment can assuredly object. From time immemorial, and in every country and age of the world, every one who has been invested with an official character, and has been raised to a particular station, civil or otherwise, has appeared on public occasions in some distinguishing garb or vestment ; and it would be no difficult matter to prove, that, long before the name of Popery or Romanism were known, the surplice was the peculiar garment with which those, who took the lead in conducting the public worship of the Temple, were arrayed. The allegation, therefore, of the surplice being a “rag of Popery,” as was once objected, is absurd, and shows the ignorance of those who advanced it. But is it true of this, as of many other things, when a word or a nickname has got the power or ascendancy*, sense and reason have little or no chance of being heard, while calumny retains its influence, and ridicule exercises its “stern laugh, which scarce the proud philosopher can scorn.” Something of the kind has occurred in every portion of our history, and may still be remarked in every department

* Whenever words have got the sway,

Both sense and reason must give way !

And, according to Burke, words may always be found, when attended with power, to explain away the most *explicit sense* and the most indubitable rights.

of life. But admit the surplice to be a "rag of Popery." Well, what does it signify? Is there any sense or reason in rejecting the *whole* of what is found in Popery, merely because it is Popery? And must we PROTEST against *every thing*, because we PROTEST against *some things*, which we judge to be alike repugnant to reason and contrary to Scripture? My private opinion always has been, that some few things have been retained which ought not to have been retained, and that some things have been swept away which it would have been wise to have retained. But, as neither the one nor the other are essential, it is not a matter of much, if of any, importance. The zeal of our Reformers was, in too many instances, exuberant and indiscriminating; and, perhaps, in no matter was their trifling and want of judgment and discretion more apparent than in this very article of the use and retention of the surplice; and I need not stop to describe the puerile conceits and childish disputes, of which the clerical habits, with two or three indifferent things besides, were the provocation, and of which the tendency was, to embitter the feelings and becloud the judgments of men, otherwise of admirable views and character, and to endanger the rise and progress of Protestant principles. Well has it been remarked by a personal friend, and a splendid writer* of the present day, "that it never was the intention of our original

* Rev. C. W. Le Bas, Principal of Hertford College. *Life of Bishop Jewel*, p. 164. A work of transcendent merit, as well as of peculiar usefulness at the present moment, when the principles of the Reformation, &c. need so much to be examined and understood.

Reformers to present the Church of England to the public mind under the aspect of a new establishment, substituted in the place of an old one, which had been subverted and demolished. The Church of England was the very same Church which had existed from the beginning; and their object was not to sweep it from the face of the earth, and to plant another on its site, but to cleanse it from superstitious corruptions, and to effect its deliverance from a shameful servitude." The surplice, therefore, was one of those things which were retained, not because it was a remnant of Popery—for it had been in use, as I have before mentioned, long before the existence of Popery—but because it was deemed the most simple, appropriate, and unobjectionable habit in which the clergy could appear when engaged in the public offices of religion; and it was also thought to be an outward garment, emblematical of that internal purity, of which many things, under the law even, were designed to be the outward symbols which should distinguish both priests and people, when assembled together in the presence, and engaged in the worship, of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and impurity in any who attend his house and join in his services. The outward garment, therefore, might be regarded as a visible and expressive symbol of an internal grace or of personal holiness. But, apart from such a spiritual signification, the habilitment itself was the least ostentatious and gorgeous that could be continued—the least obnoxious to the eye, and the least superstitious in the judgment, of the most precise and scrupulous. To the appendages of

the surplice, the hood and the scarf—the former to denote the University and the degree of the officiating minister, and the latter to signify that they are the chaplains of some peer or other—no solid objection can surely be raised. In a matter so important as that of religion, it is desirable that those who administer the services of our apostolical branch of the Catholic Church of CHRIST should be accomplished with the best gifts, and with all the ornaments of a liberal and enlightened education ; and that in the learning, as well as in the piety, of the priesthood, the people might repose a just and proper confidence : for the distinction between them and the apostles should ever be borne in mind—that while the latter were *inspired*, they are *educated* for the ministry ; and, therefore, the better the education they receive, the greater will be the credit which they will reflect on their profession, and the utility which, under God, they will bring to the cause, to which the cultivation of their minds and the improvement of their talents have been consecrated. Even in the very vestments with which they are clothed, then confidence is inspired and respect is secured. Wherefore ? None of the clergy can be entitled to wear the *surplice* till after they have satisfied their respective diocesans that they possess, at least, a competent knowledge of sacred and profane learning ; and the most diligent and searching inquiries are instituted as to their moral and religious fitness for their holy office. None can wear the *hood* till they have passed their public examination and taken their

degree, at one or other of our two Universities, after a residence of nearly *four* years. Nor are they permitted to wear the *scarf* till they have satisfied their patron, that they are deserving of such a mark of his favour, by the purity of their moral, and the respectability of their professional, character. All these things may be thought by some indifferent to be mentioned. Not so, however, as they regard the parochial clergy, whose very outward habiliments afford a sort of security to their congregations, that those who officiate before them, have brought to the temple-service the requisite qualifications for the due discharge of their ordination vows and professional duties. And what can be conceived more sublime and beautiful, more chaste and pure, more perfect and simple, than,—not an isolated part merely, but the whole of that Liturgical service, which they are enjoined to read from their desks? I have, in my time, personally known and esteemed many of the most eminent of those who have dissented from the communion of the Established Church: I may mention the venerated names of Adam Clarke, Robert Hall, and Thorpe of Bristol; and I never heard them express but one opinion—that of unqualified admiration of the scriptural simplicity and the spiritual character of the prayers and collects of our ritual; and no man, indeed, upon whose judgment, and taste, and piety, reliance can be placed, will ever withhold the testimony of his praise and commendation. What Comber, in his *Companion to the Temple*, has recorded on the subject, may be considered, if I may

so write, as the *standard-eulogium* of our Liturgical service ; and it is quite impossible to give any description of the whole of our Common Prayer-book, more appropriate in sentiment, and more beautiful in language : and any representation of my own would be perfectly superfluous. “ Our Liturgy is so lovely and ravishing in its true and native lustre, that, like the purest beauties, it needs no supplement of art or dressing, but conquers by its own attractions, and wins the affections of all but those who do not see it clearly—*ignorant qui non amant*—so *judiciously contrived*, that the *wisest* may increase at once their knowledge and devotion ; and yet so *plain*, that the most *ignorant* may pray with understanding ; so *full*, that nothing is omitted that is fit to be asked in public ; and so *particular*, that it comprises most things which we would pray for in private ; and yet so *short*, as not to tire any who have true devotion. Its *doctrine* is pure and *primitive* ; its *ceremonies* so few and *innocent*, that most of the Christian world agree in them ;* its *method* is exact and *natural* ; its *language* is significant and perspicuous, *most of the words and phrases being taken out of Holy Scripture*, and the rest are the *expressions of the first and best ages* ; so that whoever takes excep-

* The following is the opinion of Grotius, as to the character of our Liturgy : “ Certum mihi est λειτουργίαν Anglicanum, item morem imponendi manus adolescentibus in memoriam baptismi, auctoritatem Episcoporum, Presbyteria ea solis pastoribus composita, multaque alia, ejusmodi satis congruere institutis vetustioris ecclesiæ-

tions at these, must quarrel with the language of the Holy Ghost, or fall out with the Church *in her greatest innocence.*"

It is often alleged by the members of the Romish communion, that for all these excellences we are indebted to their Church, in a word, that we have borrowed from their Mass-book, or service, all, or most part, of the admirable collects and prayers interspersed throughout our Common Prayer-book. And I should say, that, were the allegation founded in truth, our obligations to the Church of Rome would be great indeed, and none should be reluctant to make the proper and grateful acknowledgment. But this acknowledgment it is perfectly unnecessary to tender, since where no favours have been received, no thanks should be expressed. What, then, is the fact? Why, that we owe to the Church of Rome no obligations on this head—we are indebted to her for not one of our collects and prayers. Our collects have been collected and abridged from the Liturgical services of communions in existence long before the establishment of Popery. They have been selected out of the Liturgies which were used both in the Western and Eastern Churches; from Liturgies even which were used by some of the apostles themselves. And here, by the way, I may observe, what an argument does this fact afford for the use of prescribed forms of prayer in the assemblies of Christian worshippers, and how right are we in following the examples of the apostles, and the practice of the primitive Churches. I have now before

me several ancient Liturgies, of which I will enumerate a few:—those of St. James, who was the first Bishop of the first Christian Church at Jerusalem, and to whom, I think, that, if any pre-eminence be due for one apostle over the other, it is to this primary Christian Bishop, the brother, too, of our most blessed Lord;—those of St. Mark, who was consecrated Bishop of Alexandria; those of Basil, Chrysostom, and the Clementine Liturgies, &c. These are the Liturgies chiefly to which, if to any, the Church of England is indebted for some portion of her prayers and collects. But the real truth is, those prayers and collects have been so altered, and shortened, and rendered so conformable to the language and phraseology of the Epistles and Gospels—in a word, to the Scriptures, that they may almost be regarded as *originals*; and as to the sentences in our Prayer-books, they are mostly the same as those which are still to be found in the most ancient Liturgies, those literally used by the apostles themselves. Now, let us look at one instance, taken from the Liturgy of St. Mark, in the Communion Service: after the creed was read, the priest says, “The Lord be with you all;” to which the people are commanded to answer, “And with thy Spirit;” then, “Lift up your hearts—we lift them up unto the Lord;” “Let us give thanks unto the Lord—it is meet and requisite so to do.” How agreeable this to the sentences in our own Prayer-books! The very same sentences occur in St. James’s Liturgy, and others, and *ex uno disce multa*. The pretensions, therefore, of the Church of Rome.

multaque alia ejusmodi, fall to the ground ; and these afford another proof of the necessity imperatively imposed on Protestants, of being more thoroughly armed than they usually are, with the knowledge of ecclesiastical history, and with an exact and accurate acquaintance with primitive times.

It will be observed that I have abstained from applying the term *Catholic* to the Church of Rome and its members. I have avoided the application of the term designedly ; and I desire to have it understood that it has been from no want of courtesy and respect to any who belong to that communion, from whom I differ so much on points of doctrine and on matters of discipline. It is as to what I conceive to be the errors, and not with the members, of that church that I have had to deal. I have no objection to adopt the term, if it be merely the designation of a sect. I perfectly agree with Clarendon, in the letter he addressed to his daughter, the Duchess of York—the mother of two of our firmest and most zealous Protestant Queens, Mary and Anne—“ Let not the canting discourse of the universality and extent of the Romish Church, which has as little of truth as the rest of its *pretensions*, prevail over you. They who will imitate the greatest part of the world, must turn Heathens ; for *the truth is*, that above half the world is possessed of Heathens, and that the Mahometans possess more than half the remainder. There is little question that of the rest which is inhabited by Christians, one part of four is not of the communion of the Church

of Rome, and God knows, in that very communion, there is as great discord in opinion, and in matters of as great moment, as is between other Christians.”* Clarendon is right: notwithstanding that the members of the Romish communion so much vaunt of their boasted unity in this, as they have done, in every preceding age. Where was the *unity* of that Church, when one of its Popes resided at Avignon and the other at Rome—both Popes existing at the same time, and claiming the same authority; and when of course the homage of the Christian world was divided between their rival claims? But it is closing our eyes upon historical facts (Protestants should study history *now* more than in general they have been accustomed to do), to believe in the existence of this unity. To say nothing of the discords that raged in the college of the Cardinals in every age, and the disputes that arose between the Jansenists and their opponents, does not disunion at the very moment I am holding the pen in my hand prevail in that church to a very great extent? A new sect of Papists has arisen in France, adhering to some of the ceremonies, but differing in many of the doctrines, of the Romish communion. In the *Eglise Apostolique Francaise*, situated in the Bouvelard St. Denis, its tenets are promulgated by the eloquent Abbe Auzou. Of this sect also there are subdivisions or sections; and the power of absolving the people from their sins is one of the tenets which has been abjured.

* Clarendon's State Papers, iii. (Sup. xxxviii., x.)

Other doctrines are maintained, which are not only at variance with some of the more prominent dogmas of the Romish Church, but also strike at the root of all church discipline and government. One of the articles of the new sect is, *l'Eglise Apostolique Francaise ne reconnait acuscun d'hierarchie*—independent of course of all acknowledgment of and obedience to the Pope. *L'administration de ses secours spirituels est gratuite*: and on the subject of the Sabbath, it is as latitudinarian as the greatest votaries of pleasure could desire—*Remplissez vos devoirs et livres—vous eusite sans crainte aut jouissances et aux plaisirs qu'elle vous presente*. Votre participation a ces mêmes plaisirs, a ces mêmes jouissances est encore une partie de vos devoirs et vous aurez accompli encore une fois laloi de Jesus Christ, &c. With respect, then, to unity of doctrine and discipline, the claim advanced by the Romish Church falls to the ground; and with as little reason can the plea of its universality be sustained—not even in the British Isles—England, Scotland and Ireland,—because the Protestants far out-number, by millions and millions, the Papists; and as to the four quarters of the globe, the plea is still more absurd, because, both Papists and Protestants are far out-numbered by Heathens, Mahometans, and others. The word Catholic, therefore, the meaning of which is universal or general, cannot with strict propriety be applied to the Church of Rome at present, because neither the dominion nor the doctrines of that church are universally acknowledged, or generally received; and the term

Catholic will only be appropriate when it shall become the dominant faith of all lands and countries, and all sects and designations shall be absorbed in the *Catholicity* of the Romish communion. But I, for one, entertain no such idea that such a consummation, however it may form a portion of the daily orisons of Papists, will ever be realized. And I see nothing, for my own part, in the present horizon, from which we need prognosticate danger to our civil and religious institutions, from that quarter at least. To the Romish communion we never can return, while the points of difference are so cardinal, and the causes of separation are so various. The only quarter from which we can apprehend, and can sustain injury, is from ourselves,—the members of the National Church: and it is a most unfortunate circumstance, that, just at this very moment, when “our Jerusalem” should be as a city at unity in itself, and we should coalesce heart and soul together, there should have sprung up within our own pale a *new sect*, whose notions upon two or three points approximate more to those of the Church from which we have long been separated, to the no small undissembled exultation of its members, than to that primitive standard of simplicity, upon which we profess, at least, that our own communion is built; and which profession we shall belie, if we again encumber its plain rites with ostentatious ceremonies, and destroy their beautiful simplicity by superstitious, semi-papistical and unauthorized interpretations and observances. We have quite disunion enough already among our clergy,

unhappily. Let us not add to the number of our divisions, nor spoil a good cause, nor endanger a goodly fabric by new innovations, and by giving rise to new differences and fresh alienations among each other. Why innovate at all? Have we so few stumbling-blocks in our pathway, that we need more of the brambles and thistles of human theories and new-fangled interpretations, to encumber our paths, and to keep open our wounds; for that they will cause "offence," and more and more foment feuds amongst us, who shall doubt? Who knows what is in man, must know how genial is the soil for our difference to grow and our bad passions to ripen? Be we on our guard; and putting aside our differences, let us have charity one with another—let us have union in our camp, and fight the battles of English liberty—of the British constitution in Church and State—with harmony in our souls, and energy in our ranks. Let love be inscribed on our banners—let love unite and inflame our affections one towards the other. Firm, compact, and united, however numerous the foes, and arduous the contest, the cause will be triumphant, for it is the cause of human liberty, struggling for its existence and perpetuity, against the worst despotism and tyranny that ever enslaved the conscience and fettered the freedom of human thought and action—a tyranny which will suffer no man to have a voice or a will of his own, but would imprison in the Inquisition, and torture on the wheel, any one who dared to think for himself, or entertain an opinion different from that of an arbitrary

priesthood; a galling and insufferable tyranny, of which a Republican no less than a Royalist, a Whig and Radical no less than a Conservative and Tory—a Dissenter no less than a Churchman, are alike concerned to arrest its encroachments and to oppose its re-establishment. For, let none of us be so deluded as to imagine that, because—to use the canting phrasology of the times, the march of science has rapidly *progressed*, the light of knowledge has wonderfully expanded, and the spread of religion has been astonishingly great, therefore our deeds will be less evil, and the tender mercies of this execrable tyranny, if enthroned again, be less cruel. No: human nature is the same in every age and country. What it has been, it is, it will be. What it is in the nineteenth, it will be in the twentieth century, if the world should last so long, and no marvellous amelioration be effected in its constitution and character—an amelioration of which I see no visible token in the improved habits and in the moral rectitude of the species. What human nature was in the seventeenth century in Ireland, where a cold-blooded massacre of thousands and thousands of the Protestants was perpetrated by the Papists.—What it was in France in the 18th century, where, notwithstanding it was the boast of philosophy that never did a more splendid halo of light beam upon the land, the streets of her capital and other towns were deluged with the blood of their inhabitants. What it is in the 19th century, let Ireland at this very moment furnish the mournful illus-

tration. What means that emblem of "death's head and cross bones?" Are we in such Egyptian darkness, and are we living in so hieroglyphical an age, that we cannot decipher its sense, and understand its purport? If the power be weak, the spirit is yet strong to persecute, if not to exterminate; and the language holden, as well as the deeds done, and the murders perpetrated from day unto day, in cold blood, and in blind zeal, attest the fact, that what human nature hath been, it still is; and that the character of the Romish creed, in which, indeed, it prides itself, is unchanged, and unchanging. *Ecclesia Romæ non mutata est, nunquam mutabitur!*

JAMÉS RUDGE, D.D.

Hawkchurch Rectory,
Jan. 1, 1839.

THE ERRORS
OF
THE ROMISH CHURCH.
BY
JAMES RUDGE, D.D.

THE ERRORS

OF THE

ROMISH CHURCH.

"Search the Scriptures."—*John v. 39.*

It is naturally to have been expected that, in the course of a long and not inactive professional life, I should have had frequent intercourse and communion with persons of various sects and denominations; and I trust and hope that on no occasion upon which I have holden conversation with them, either on their peculiar tenets, or on particular passages of the Scriptures which at any time have formed the subject of conversation, have the arguments which I employed to combat what appeared to me to be erroneous in doctrine been advanced in an acrimonious spirit, or urged in an offensive manner: in one word, that the mind of the Christian and the courtesy of the gentleman—terms which should be, and which are synonymous, where the mild and gentle spirit of Christ prevails—have not been forgotten. And I intend that the rule of Christian charity shall not be violated, nor the language of intemperance and abuse, which never does good to any cause, be introduced in the discussion into

which peculiar associations have induced me to enter at the present moment.

It is the injunction of the Apostle Peter, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and reverence." Now if this advice be necessary to be adopted as a general rule, as to the great and cardinal doctrines of the Scriptures, of which every man ought to possess a clear and enlightened understanding, by a daily and studious examination of their precious contents, I apprehend that it is no less necessary to be followed as an imperative rule by the members of the Protestant community in general, and by those of the Established Church in particular. And it is because I think that a vast proportion of those who profess themselves to be Protestants are not "ready *always* to give an answer to every man that asketh" them *the reasons* upon which their faith is founded, and their communion with the Church of Rome has been broken, that I have selected the present text as one peculiarly appropriate at this particular moment : for, singular enough, this is the very day on which, three centuries since, namely, on the fourth day of October, in the year one thousand five hundred and thirty-five, the people of England had an opportunity of fulfilling the text literally, or, in other words, of *searching the Scriptures* in their vernacular tongue. All accounts which have been transmitted concur in representing that the blessed privilege, which was then conferred on the

people, of being able to read the Scriptures, sanctioned by authority, was embraced and enjoyed "with all readiness of mind," and that they "searched the Scriptures daily, whether the things" they had heretofore heard from the lips of their teachers "were so." The result of their daily and continued "search" was, that "many of them believed," and found that much of what they had hitherto been taught as "doctrines" of Scripture, were but the "commandments of men." Hence the character of their service underwent a mighty and extraordinary change. From drawing nigh unto God with their mouths and their lips only, and in a language of which the ear heard indeed the sound, but the understanding embraced not the sense, they were led to honour him in their hearts, with all the affections of their souls, and with all the energies of their minds. At once simple and rational in their worship, they read in their homes, or they heard in their parish churches and from their pulpits, all the wonderful works of God, all that had been done by himself, and all that had been wrought by his Son, and all that yet can be accomplished by his Spirit, for the present good and final blessedness of the people, from generation to generation. All this the people, from the highest to the lowest, came in time to understand; and the more they heard or read, the more they prized the blessed privilege of being able "to search" in their own tongue the things that so belonged to their permanent peace, and concerned their everlasting salvation.

And very meet and right, and our bounden duty it is, that *we* should sympathize with their feelings, and appreciate this inestimable blessing; and, merging all our minor differences on unessential points of discipline and doctrine, unite all hands and concentrate all hearts in the one undivided effort of transmitting the Bible, whole, and uncorrupt, and unimpaired, to the latest generation, and not by our untimely and senseless divisions, and strifes, and emulations, abandon to a wakeful and vigilant foe an edifice which it has cost such a profusion of human toil and suffering to rear, and such a sacrifice of human blood to cement. If, in our almanacks, there are what are termed certain *red-letter days* registered, on which we are directed to commemorate some historical event, and some national deliverance, *that*, methinks, should stand prominently forth as the greatest of commemorative days--*that* on which the Bible, out of a tongue known but to a few, was translated into a language known unto all among the people. It should be a day of national rejoicing—a day of national thanksgiving in the domestic circle and in the public courts of the Lord's house—a day greatly to be remembered by all the people, as one in which they emerged out of darkness into a marvellous light, by the clear and steady brightness of which their capacities have been sufficiently illuminated to see, and their feet have happily been directed to choose, that good path wherein is to be found, without the brambles and thistles of human error, the truth which gives to man all his worth, by giving him all his knowledge, to be wise unto salvation!

On this ever memorable day, then, were the whole of the Scriptures, which we are enjoined in the text to search, translated into the English tongue and printed and published: and it is curious to record the title affixed to this mighty effort of the translator's genius and industry. It runs thus: "The BIBLIA—the Bible, i. e. the Holy Scriptures of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully and newly translated out of Doutche and Latyn into English, by *Miles Coverdale*, folio." This version was complete, and it was directed by authority, that copies of it should be distributed and placed in the choirs of every parish church, to which the people resorted with the utmost avidity, and read or heard the Scriptures with the utmost pleasure and improvement. Tindal had previously translated the New, and some parts of the Old Testament; but these were ordered to be burnt, as *pestilential and scandalous publications*; and, as many were committed to the flames for dispersing them, the circulation was far from being general. But the torch of inquiry had been lighted by such as had been circulated, and nothing could quench the spirit which had been aroused. Neither the flames of persecution, nor the writings even of the accomplished More against Tindal's translations, could check the ardour with which they were sought and studied; and they had the effect of paving the way for the reception of the mightier and more successful enterprise of his brother labourer in this holy vineyard—Coverdale. In the same celestial course, or hemisphere, indeed, there had appeared,

about a century and a half antecedently—(for the visits of these spiritual luminaries have been and are like those of angels, “few and far between;” or those of comets, occasionally, but once or twice in centuries)—there appeared a star of extraordinary magnitude and splendour, not inappropriately termed the *Morning-star of the Reformation*, John Wiclif. I have no difficulty in admitting the correctness of this designation; but while I think that Wiclif was the *Morning-star*, I regard Coverdale in no other light than as the *Day-star of the Reformation*; since the copies of the Scriptures translated by the latter were sanctioned by authority; and by means of the press, their circulation was immense, and their readers numerous. Whereas the translation of Wiclif was made before the art of printing had been discovered; and the labour necessarily attendant upon transcription rendered the number of copies dispersed comparatively small and limited. His translation was read with uncommon avidity by those who were so fortunate as to be able to procure copies of it; but the numbers were few, and its circulation among the people must have been confined, more especially as every effort was made to arrest its dispersion, and an act of parliament even was subsequently passed by which the laity were prohibited from reading any translation of the Bible in English.

Whatever repugnance or opposition an enactment of this sort might occasion, still, when we regard the

general ignorance*, and the abject mental slavery in which the minds of the great mass of the people were then held, we shall have little hesitation in admitting that its influence must have been great, and that the number of the readers of the English Bible, or even of the few partial versions in the Anglo-Saxon

* Nothing could be more deplorably low than the ebb of classical literature, and the general ignorance of the priests, about the period at which Coverdale's translation was made; of which I can give no greater proof than that the *Greek* language was scarcely known at either of the two Universities, and that an Italian, of the name *Caius Auberinus*, was employed by the University of Cambridge to compose its ordinary *Latin* epistles, for each of which he received a fee of twenty-pence. About this period, also, no principle was more strongly maintained and acted upon than that the decrees of Bishops were to be held of greater authority than the Scriptures, of which the translation of a single text was interdicted, and any person or persons so offending were excommunicated. One *Richard Butler*, merely for having read certain chapters of the Evangelists in English, which were represented as *erroneous and damnable books*, was cited before the Bishop of London, and this a few years only before Coverdale's translation, viz., in 1512; and the illustrious Dean Colet, the founder of St. Paul's school, was subjected by the same Bishop (Fitzjames) to ecclesiastical censure, for having merely translated the *pater-noster* into English! Erasmus, in a letter in which he alluded to the general ignorance of that period, remarked, that to understand Greek is heresy—in short, every thing to which they (priests) are not accustomed, is heresy. See *Erasmi Epist. Lib. 12, Ep. 10*; also, the Constitutions of Arundel and Fox, Henry VIII., p. 10.

language, which had been transcribed before the appearance of Wiclif's translation, was but small. There are still in existance numerous versions of Wiclif's Bible in manuscript, of which I have seen two copies in the Bodleian and Sion College libraries; and it is singular that his translation of the Old Testament has never yet appeared in print. In reference to the various manuscripts still extant of Wiclif's translation, an esteemed friend* of mine, in his late elegant biographical work on this great Reformer, has the following remarks: "We may readily judge of the activity and eagerness with which they were originally circulated, when we find that such a multitude of copies have still survived the exterminating zeal of papal inquisitors. That the appearance of such a work occasioned among the Romanists the deepest alarm, and the hottest indignation, is perfectly notorious. The influx of light naturally produced consternation among those whose element was darkness. His work was denounced and proscribed, as tainted almost with the guilt of sacrilege."

It is now quite time that I should proceed, after these preliminary remarks (which I trust are not unseasonable nor injudicious at this moment, in which we need to be so much *reminded* of our past and present mercies), to explain the purpose to which I mean to

* Rev. C. W. Le Bas. See p. 233.—The publications of the Lives of our First Reformers at the present moment are wise and seasonable.

apply the words of our most blessed Lord in the text. I mean to *test* by it a few of the leading dogmas, or doctrines of that church with which we have broken communion ; and, on account of our *protestation* against these dogmas and doctrines, the name by which we are known has been derived.

The word "Scriptures," mentioned in the text, means literally nothing more than "the writings ;" and, by way of eminence, they are so called, in order that they may be distinguished from all other writings whatsoever ; and as, at the time at which the injunction in the text was given, the Scriptures, or writings, of the Old Testament were then only in existence, our Lord could have referred only to that portion of the Bible, or the Book, containing the revelation of the will of God. These books or writings, not only those to whom they were then addressed by our Lord, but those to whom they are *now* addressed by his Spirit are directed to *search* diligently, and piously to examine and *scrutinize*, as the Greek word* might perhaps be better rendered : and as we have the authority of our Lord for asserting that this portion of the Bible *testified* of himself—"Search (or scrutinize) the Scriptures,

* Ἐπευνᾶτε—scrutamini—scrutinize. It is the judicious remark of Beza : "In hoc hodie non minus ab iis peccatur qui ad Scripturatum lectionem, non veritatis indè inquirendæ studium, sed præjudicatas opiniones aut aliquid etiam deterius adferunt ; ideoque nec videndo vident, nec audiendo audiunt, nec legendo discunt.

and they are they which testify of me"—we contend that the injunction to search, and investigate, and closely to scrutinize them, extends as much to the Scriptures of the New, as it does to the Scriptures of the Old, Testament. And here, upon this pivot, all argument on the subject must turn, and upon this one point no difference of opinion *should* exist among the members of any community professing itself to be Christian. The command is express and imperative. It is quite impossible to evade its force, or explain away its obligation, however subtle the argument, or plausible the theory. The command is so plain, that even he that runs may read, and understand, and confound, by a "*Thus saith the Lord,*" the proudest theologian, and the haughtiest polemic. None can be so illiterate as not to see that where there is a "*Thus saith the Lord,*" or, in other words, where in any passage in which Christ is the speaker and Christ is the teacher of any precept or command—no single individual, however elevated his station, no public body, however numerous or respectable its members—no head of a particular communion, and no general council, however composed, can impair or supersede the authority upon which such precept or command has been founded. Now apply this argument to the text. It is Christ who says "Search the Scriptures." What, therefore, in plain terms, is the inference to be drawn? Why that all, as in duty bound to the great Head of the Church, must obey the command without mental reserve, and

with unqualified submission ; and I further argue, that He who gave the command must have had some wise and substantial reason in view for having given it. Then the question is, What was that reason ?—(for I suspect, if the Scriptures were to be searched, they must be placed in our hands, or where would have been the sense of the command ?)—It was this, that in the Law, and in the Psalms, and in the Prophecies of the old dispensation, the testimony and the things concerning Jesus were to be found, and which He himself attests were fulfilled in him, who was the way, and the truth, and the life, and the end of the law. Now let this be admitted—it cannot by any artifice be evaded—you will then reason thus, that the search or scrutiny could never be attended with danger: on the contrary, that whenever it was conducted with no other design but that of informing the understanding, extending the knowledge, and rectifying the temper and life of the searcher as to the contents of the Scriptures, the tendency must, at all times, and in every instance, be beneficial—the result all-important. And wherefore ? Why because “all Scripture was given by inspiration of God,” and has no other object and can produce no other effect but to be “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” But beside all these reasons for studying and searching the Scriptures with a righteous mind and a teachable spirit, of what sense or signification would be the commendation bestowed on Timothy, that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were

able to make him, *and every one else*, wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Chrsit Jesus? Or of what use or benefit the prayer of David, "Give me understanding according to thy Word ; and other petitions and expressions of a like import, interspersed throughout various portions of the Scriptures? I would particularly specify that cardinal passage in which are briefly comprehended the orthodox doctrine and all-essential faith of every believer—" This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

But it is really a waste of time to insist upon a matter so palpable to the understanding, so clear to the apprehension of the commonest and most uninstructed intellect. If I wanted an argument for the translation of the Scriptures, and their distribution among the people, here it is supplied to my hand in this text ; and with this one command would I put to flight whatever might be advanced from any quarter whatsoever against their free and universal diffusion amongst all classes of the community, and more especially the poor and ignorant, that they might read, and learn, and inwardly digest them, to the improvement of their minds, and the salvation, happily, of their souls, as their best companion in solitude, and their surest comforter in affliction. I have thought it necessary thus to advert to this point, because, as you well know, there are those, of a different communion from our own, who *still* persist in thinking that the Scriptures ought *not* to be open to the inspec-

tion of the people, and that, in spite of the injunction of the great Head of the Church, *conveyed in my text*, the laity should be prohibited from searching and scrutinizing their contents. I remember but lately having had some conversation on this very point with some, otherwise intelligent, members of the communion to which I have alluded, by whom it was contended that the command was not to be considered as a general rule, but to be confined in its application to those only to whom the interpretation of the Scriptures has been confided, and that, in a word, without such authorized interpretations, the Scriptures would only bewilder the understanding, and multiply sects and heresies amongst the people. For my own part, an objection of this kind, arising from the numerous opinions to which an open and unreserved appeal to the Scriptures might give rise, has not upon me the slightest weight or influence. For so long as human nature continues in its present state, a strict uniformity of opinion as to ecclesiastical discipline, or doctrine, cannot be expected; differences of view will exist; and I am yet to learn that any optical instrument has been so constructed as to reflect upon the mental retina of *all* precisely the same aspect of any particular object as it may have reflected on others. I should hail this as the happiest of human inventions; but it would be delirious to expect it till that most blessed era shall arrive, when, in the magnificent language of prophecy, “the Spirit of our Lord shall rest upon us—the spirit of wisdom and

understanding: the fear of the Lord shall be before our eyes, and righteousness shall be the girdle of our loins: the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

But, besides, there is one point—to me of infinite importance—which seems to have never entered into the calculations, or to have eluded the notice, of such an object to the diffusion of the Scriptures among the laity. While these combatants have been wrangling and disputing the point, and spending that time in *contesting* which should have been spent in *practising*, there have been myriads and myriads of searchers into the plain letter of the Scriptures, which has formed their daily meat and drink, and their most costly and nourishing aliment, to whom it was bliss, as they journeyed on in their pilgrimage heavenwards, to have been ignorant that such angry disputations existed, and such hostile passions had been set on fire, on points so clear, and on matters so simple. We hear too much of the world of theological polemics—too little of the thousands and of the tens of thousands who are content to read with the teachableness of infants, and to receive with the spirit of angels, that open and unsealed volume which, in the straw-built shed, and in the humble cottage, is the best companion of the poor, the best enlightener of the ignorant, and the best comforter of the dis'tressed—which imparts to them the

best of all knowledge, the knowledge of the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent ; and makes them wise in the pursuit and attainment of that salvation which the Holy Scriptures, line upon line, teach, and Christ, by his precious blood and atoning sacrifice, hath purchased for them.

I shall now endeavour to *test*, by the text, several of the leading dogmas or doctrines of that Church against which the members of our own communion protest as contrary to the Scriptures. They are the following : tradition ; the supremacy of the Pope ; transubstantiation ; the sacrifice of the mass ; adoration of images ; and, lastly, the invocation to saints. Of these I shall take notice in order.

And, first, of *Tradition*. As directed by my blessed Master in the text, I commence my search into the precious archives of the Scriptures, and the result of my scrutiny is, that there are only twelve places, including the parallel passages, in which the word occurs. Now out of these twelve passages in which I find the word, the language employed in ten of them is any thing but the language of commendation. But even admitting, which I do not, that the language of St. Paul in one, and of St. Peter in another place, may be said to favour the doctrine, what saith Christ ? It is impossible for language to be less equivocal, or reprobation to be more strong ; and with me the testimony of Jesus is decisive on the point. “ Then came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusa-

lent, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the *tradition* of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Now hear the answer of Christ: "But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your *traditions*? Ye have made the commandment of God of *none effect by your tradition*? Ye hypocrites, &c., in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." It is worth while to hear the remark of Christ, when told by his own disciples that the Pharisees were offended at what he had said in allusion to their traditions: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." And rooted up doth a doctrine of this kind deserve to be, which hath nothing in truth or Scripture to support it, which might be made the ready minister of the most monstrous crimes and of the most heterodox doctrines. Such, indeed, was the case in the time of our Lord by those among the Jews who held in higher estimation the oral traditions than the written law, professing a scrupulous regard to the *former*, while they committed the grossest violations of the *latter*. As the Jews pretended that their traditions were delivered by God to Moses upon Mount Sinai, and by him were conveyed to the elders, so the members of the Romish Church allege, without even the shadow of a shade of authority to support them, that traditions were delivered by Christ to the apostles, and by them transmitted to the heads of their own

communion, as the successors of the apostles ; and this doctrine was strenuously maintained and insisted upon by the Council of Trent*, at which all access to the Sacred Volume, and all interpretations of the Holy

* In a memorial presented to Pope Julius III., Oct. 20, 1553, by the Bishops of Bononia (Termulæ, Caprulæ, and Thessalonica) relative to the prevailing abuses and corruptions, the following important admission is made : “ We believe as an article of faith what the Council of Trent has decreed on tradition, that our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles delivered more precepts, relating to manners and faith, by word of mouth, than are in the Scriptures ; and that these, without writing, were handed down to us : and although we cannot prove this clearly (*for amongst ourselves we plainly acknowledge that we have no proofs, but some sort of conjectures to make out what we teach concerning tradition*), yet we confess this to be true, *because the Roman Church maintains it*. In the days of the apostles (*to tell you the truth, but you must be silent*) and for several years after them, there was no mention made of either Pope or Cardinals—much less of any of those doctrines, laws, constitutions, nor of this sovereignty, which we now exercise over people and nations.” “ We have reserved the most considerable advice, which we could at this time give your Holiness, to the last.” They then proceed to suggest that the Pope should use all his force to prevent the Gospel from being read, and they add, “ Really, whosoever shall diligently weigh the Scripture, and then consider all the things that are usually done in our churches, will find there is great difference betwixt them ; and that this doctrine of ours is very unlike, and in many things quite repugnant to it.” I need not make a single comment on this extract ; a Protestant could scarcely find any thing more to his purpose.

Scriptures, contrary to their own peculiar tenets, were prohibited. Upon this point, then, it is unnecessary for me to expend any further remark. To the question, whether we do now stand bound in the sight of God to yield to traditions urged by the Church of Rome the same obedience and reverence we do to his written law, honouring equally, and adoring both as divine, I answer in the language of the admirable Hooker, with a simple negative, No;* and conclude, with the Church of England, that the Holy Scriptures containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

I have now to test by the text (the doctrine of tradition having broken down under its weight and pressure) *the Supremacy of the Pope*. Under the direction of my Lord, then, I take the Scriptures in my hand, and, with no other view but that of truth, I enter upon the scrutiny as to this point. And what is the result of my search? Why that the name even is not to be discovered in any one verse or portion of the Sacred Volume. Then what is the authority upon which the assumption of the supremacy rests? We are told (but assertion is no proof) that it rests chiefly upon one particular passage of the Scriptures. To that pas-

* Hooker's Eccles. Polity. Vol. I. p. 270.

sage, then, we refer, as authority either to refute the assumption, or to establish the doctrine of the supremacy. “When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And *they* said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto *them*, But whom say ye that I am? And *Simon Peter* answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This promptitude of Peter to answer a question, personally addressed by our Lord as much to the other disciples as to himself, is in perfect keeping with all that we collect from the Scriptures concerning the generous ardour of his character, and the general impetuosity of his temper. We have in this very chapter another instance on record. When our Lord made a communication to the disciples generally of his approaching sufferings and death, Peter, we read, instantly began to talk, and rebuke him. What did our Saviour do and say to him? “He *turned*, and said unto him, Get thee behind me, *Satan*: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”†

† I have ever thought that the indiscreet and intemperate zeal on so many occasions displayed by Peter (witness his conduct in the case of Malchus), repels the idea of any pre-eminence being intended by our Lord of that apostle over his fellow-labourers. All, I take it, were on a perfect equality, and any display of a spirit of superiority of one over the

But I must proceed to quote the remainder of the passage : “ And Jesus answered and said unto Peter,” addressing him in the Syriac language, “ Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee (meaning his frank and prompt acknowledgment of Christ’s divinity), but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, *that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” This, then, is the passage on which the supremacy of the Pope is built. Now, whatever sense may be affixed and interpretation be given to the passage in question, my business is with the Scriptures alone, by which only any position advanced, and any assertion made, are to be judged. One thing, then, is clear in this

others would have been instantly repressed, as we know, indeed, that it was. There never appeared on earth one who possessed, in a higher degree, so sound and sober a judgment as our Lord ; and he perfectly well knew, that if the innocence of the dove were not united with the wisdom of the serpent, or, in other words, the zeal of the martyr was not tempered with the judgment of the sage, the Gospel would stand but little chance of finally accomplishing the purpose for which it should be preached. If we may credit the ecclesiastical historian, Eusebius, who gives as his authority Clement (the same, probably, whose name appears in one of the Epistles, and who certainly lived in the times, and was conversant with the acts of the apostles), James surnamed Justus was constituted by the apostles themselves as their head or bishop.

passage—not the slightest mention is made, not the remotest allusion is given, as to any thing concerning the head of the Romish Church. The Scriptures are silent on the point: therefore, not bearing the test to which the doctrine is subjected, it must be rejected as anti-scriptural. But a word or two as to the address itself. If we consult other portions of the Scriptures, we shall find that Christ, and Christ alone, is the Rock on which the Church, or, in other words, the cardinal doctrine of his Sonship and divinity are built, and these are they against which the gates of hell, or the efforts of the devil and his agents, shall never prevail. Not surely Peter. *He* a rock! which could not even avert the very first shock of adversity, or the very first fury of the storm to which it was opposed! Not indeed Peter, nor any other of his associates and companions, who all fled and forsook their heavenly Master in the hour and at the season in which he most needed the countenance of a companion to support, and the sympathy of a friend to cheer him. Christ alone was the Rock, which passed with the fathers through the sea, and of which we must drink through this wilderness of a world, being ourselves “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*,” the Cephas or rock of our salvation*. Were it to my present purpose, I could prove from the writings of several of the fathers, who, as-

* 1 Cor. x. 4; Ephes. ii. 20.

surely, from the circumstance of their having lived nearer the times of the apostles, are more likely to be better interpreters of the Scriptures, and better testimonies than subsequent writers, that the address of our Lord to Peter was meant to refer, not to him personally, but to the doctrine to which his lips had just given utterance ; and it is on the rock of Peter's confession, according to an ancient father, Hilary, that the edifice of the church has been erected.† From the silence, then, of the Scriptures, and the testimonies of the apostolical fathers, there is no foundation for the supremacy of the Popes, not for any other interpretation but the one just given. In truth, for the first six hundred years of the Christian Church, or of what I may call its best and palmy days, such an assumption had never been advanced : nor do I think that there is the slightest authority for assuming that Peter had any pre-eminence over any of the other apostles, nor that he was ever even consecrated as bishop, or ever resided within the walls, of Rome. I know what Baronius and others have *asserted* on the subject ; but the Scriptures are silent, and it is scarcely to be credited that the mention of a circumstance so important would have been omitted, had it ever occurred. The only place of which he was a Bishop was Antioch.

† Hæc una felix fidei Petra, quam Petrus ore suo confessus est. *Vid. Hil. de Trinitate, Lib. 6.* Greg. Nyssen. Chrys. Cyril. and Jerome, may be consulted as evidences on this point.

With respect to the infallibility of the Popes, the Scriptures are equally silent ; and surely I may be allowed to say, without exposing myself to the imputation of advancing any thing either uncharitable in spirit, or uncourteous in language, that the assumption of infallibility on the part of any human being, however elevated his rank, or eminent his piety, is little consistent with the spirit of Christian humility and meekness ; and it were surely somewhat like blasphemy to predicate this of any one, when repudiated even by the great Head of the Church himself, on a very interesting occasion recorded in the Scriptures—“ Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but one, that is, God.” Besides, before it could be conceded to the Popes, it must be proved that their private conduct was exempt from a single reproach, and their public character unstained by a single vice. The language of censure is at all times painful to be employed in reference to persons in exalted stations ; yet must it not be withholden, when the interests of religion and the cause of truth require its exercise. If, therefore, historical facts are not to be falsified, the private characters of many of the Popes were anything but what they should have been in persons claiming to themselves the attribute of infallibility. And how, again, could such a claim be advanced, with the slightest degree of truth and justice, when it is but too well known that the most rancorous spirit invaded the breasts of the members of that hierarchy, and the sight of all good

Christians was pained by the appearance of two bishops, each claiming at the same period equal infallibility—one division of Europe siding with Pope Urban VI., who resided at Rome, and the other part of Europe espousing the cause of Clement VII., who removed to Avignon, in France.*

These are historical facts, which none can dispute or gainsay ; which none can palliate or excuse ; and they are sufficient to establish the point, that the claim of infallibility cannot be appropriated with truth to the one or the other, or indeed to any one clothed with mortal flesh and infirmity, and subject, as every one is more or less, to the influx of *evil and corrupt affections*. Unhappy is that religious community in which the *sacerdotal* becomes at all allied with the *political* character, and those whose *business* it is to seek peace and ensue it, entangle and embroil themselves in the politics of this world ; with which the priesthood, if they would learn a lesson from the example, and even the silence of their Divine Master, would have nought to do, unless, indeed, in those extraordinary emergencies and times when the throne and the altar are equally assailed, and when *silence becomes the opprobrium, and neutrality the crime*, of a good citizen and a good Christian. But I am alluding to ordinary occasions, on which it is far better for the

* All Europe, except France and Spain, Scotland, Sicily, and Cyprus, acknowledged the Italian, Urban VI., to be Pope.

clergy of all religious communities to avoid the stormy atmosphere of state politics ; for I am justified by the Scriptures, by history, and by reason in asserting, that a curse is entailed, rather than a blessing produced, by the interference of the priesthood : and I add, in reference to the Romish communion, that had the banns against all alliance of the *sacerdotal* with the *political* character been originally forbidden, and had no union been subsequently formed between them, it is as clear to my mind as the clearest of mathematical demonstrations, that no severance from the see of Rome would ever have occurred ; the name of Protestant would in all probability never have been known, and the title of *Catholic*, of which she boasts as her proudest cognomen, but which she has lost, would up to this moment have been retained. And this I moreover add, addressing myself to that communion, Divorce yourself from all unhallowed embraces with the politics of empires and states ; rid yourself of all such things as are an insult to the reason and understanding of mankind, and directly at variance with the strict letter and spirit of the Scriptures, such as the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the mass : sweep the Augean clean of these abominations, and others of a like kind, and I for one, as a Protestant minister, will return into the bosom of your Church, with which my forefathers broke communion chiefly because you acted contrary to the letter, and corrupted the simplicity of Gospel truth ; and whose religion is precisely what yours is, save and ex-

cept your mutilations and corruptions. Pope Adrian VI., through his nuncio at the Diet of Nuremberg, in 1523, represented "that the sins of Rome were manifest and grievous, and that even from the *head* down to the *inferior* clergy, all had gone astray, and that none were free from guilt—no, not one." Had a timely reform taken place, it is more than probable that the Protestant Reformation would never have been heard of. But the abuses and corruptions of the Church and her clergy were suffered to continue, and hence the events to which, under God, nothing *more* contributed than the translation of the Scriptures, in which what they read they found quite repugnant to what they saw! A word or two in passing, let me add, in reference to present scenes and times. Think not of ever regaining the ascendancy you have lost, even though you were alone to cultivate the arts of peace, and study to act up to the apostolical rule (applicable as much to religious communities as to private individuals), to mind your own business. The intelligence of the age is against you. You are only *powerful* when the people are *ignorant*. Enlighten, educate the nations; remove the darkness that yet covers a portion of the earth, and the gross darkness that yet overshadows much of the globe: let the Gentiles come to the full sight of the Lord, and the pure knowledge of his Word. You are *powerless* as an instrument of political priestcraft; but, in the exact ratio in which you cease to be so, a *blessing* to such as belong to your

communion, and attend your ministrations. Have you been lately acting a wise and judicious part? Is it in good taste, and with perfect consistency, that you should rebuke the reformers of the sixteenth century—you who, to a man, are now reformers in the nineteenth century, and who, together with your representatives in parliament, are in league and combination, expressed or implied, with those who, at their political unions, and in their public documents, have professed that their object is to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down all state religions and ecclesiastical establishments?

O, lamentable, this inconsistency! O, perilous, this confederacy of yours! And this, too, with those who are ten thousand times more aliens from you in doctrine and discipline than ourselves, and who, like some of our first reformers, lamentably senseless in this respect, as they confessedly were in some others, would still deem any approximation to the discipline of your Church, the habiliments of your priesthood, and the crucifixes of your altars, as the “remnants of the Amorites,” as the touch of the leprosy, or as the “accursed things.” You may be mutually using each other as ladders for reaching the point or eminence to which it is your ambition and wish to climb. Be it so. But mind; our own Church being then in the dust, and the stones of which it was once composed being then used as fit only to *macadamize* our roads and to pave our streets, or to repair our bridges and highways, as

some political fanatic lately raved—mind, put not forth your little finger to touch its revenues, or appropriate any of its spoils. The instant you did so, you would be crushed to the earth; and perhaps repose in the same grave, and mingle your bones in the same dust, as your exterminated and crushed Protestant fellow-sufferers and brethren. See what such an alliance would produce inevitably and speedily. How prized and recompensed the merit of your co-operation, and the value of your services! What, then, have you to expect from spoliation and robbery? The Church lying in the dust, its spoils would be divided amongst the heterogeneous mass of spoliators who, strong in union against the Church while it stood, would, when prostrate, turn their weapons against one another, the one sect struggling with another sect for the mastery and pre-eminence. We know, or at least we ought to know, what human nature is, and how little concord and conformity could be expected among such elements of strife and confusion. Would the Independent be content that what is here, in these western parts of the kingdom, the largest sect by far, the Bryanites, should attain the pre-eminence, and enjoy the ecclesiastical revenues? or one of the multifarious sections into which they are divided, be disposed to acquiesce in the division of the spoils, or the appropriation of the revenues to another? But whether or no such would be the then consummation of things, *you* would come in, to a certainty, for no share of the spo-

liation. A wiser man than any in our different religious communities hath remarked, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us." You have read, perhaps, in the elegant pages of your own Lingard, what took place at a certain period of our history. It forms, perhaps, one of the most melancholy chapters in the historian's work; but it is read in vain unless it shall have read a triumphant lecture on the impolicy of forming such associations, of which the termination generally is no good to the community at large, nor any permanent benefit to individuals in particular.

Transubstantiation is a doctrine of the Romish Church to which I shall next direct your attention, and subject it to the same test as I have those of tradition, and the supremacy and infallibility of the Popes and their Church. The meaning of the word *transubstantiation* is literally the change of one substance into, or over, that of another: and it is asserted by the members of the Romish communion, that immediately as the priest has consecrated the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the substance becomes changed, and instead of being symbols or figures, they are the actual, and real, and identical body of Christ which suffered on the cross, and that we literally drink his blood, and as literally eat his flesh. This doctrine, revolting as it is to the common sense and

reason of mankind, was never heard of till about the middle of the ninth century, when it attracted some attention, and gave rise to some controversy ; but it was not till the thirteenth century that it was formally introduced and adopted, and the name by which it is now known was given to it by Pope Innocent III., at the fourth Lateran council. It is further asserted, that on the substance being changed at consecration, and the bread and wine being converted into the natural body and blood of Christ, and ceasing, in short, to be any longer bread and wine, the identical person of the Redeemer is present : in other words, his real presence enjoyed, as much so as at the time and place in which he presented the bread and wine to his twelve disciples at the paschal supper.

We will now refer to the passage of the Scriptures upon which the Papists have constructed this doctrine, and have grounded their belief in this article ; and as it is *one* to which the very highest degree of importance has been attached by all denominations and sects of professing Christians—more, in the judgment of some theologians, than is warranted by the Scriptures—your more particular attention is besought. I have no hesitation whatever in stating my own opinion on the matter to be this : that all duties enjoined in the written word by God are of like importance, and are to be observed without any reservation of mind, or any difference of regard ; or that if a greater importance be attached to one more than to another duty, it should

assuredly be to that which our Lord himself has pronounced to be “the great commandment;” that which indeed is the foundation of all religion and religious duties—the love and worship of the Lord our God: and these we are enjoined to tender with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength. It is always the safer and better course to adhere as much as possible to the strict letter of what God has written, and not to force a fanciful construction on any particular passage we meet with; for it is to this cause that have been mainly attributable the many erroneous tenets which have been promulgated, or, what St. Peter himself has termed, “the damnable heresies” which have been “brought in” by false teachers; each deeming himself warranted to entertain his own views, and to proclaim his own interpretations of the Scriptures, by which a shipwreck has been made of the faith of some weak professors, and the peace and harmony of the Christian community have been outraged and destroyed. It is a perilous thing to venture on the stormy and turbulent sea of conjecture, and none there be (unless they possess a clear head to direct, and a steady hand to steer their vessel) but must founder amid the rocks and quicksands to which they are exposed at every course they take, and in every direction they go.

These remarks are not without their point as to the passage which I shall now quote: “And as they were eating (*Christ* and his twelve disciples), Jesus took

bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it *to the disciples*, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it *to them*, saying, Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." It was at the paschal commemoration of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt that these words were spoken and this act was done. They have been recorded by three of the evangelists, with scarcely any variation of phraseology ; but an important addition has been made to the two accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark by St. Luke. He has added, " This do in remembrance of me." The command to observe, and the motive for observing it superadded. But this injunction, you will remark, was addressed to the twelve disciples, including the traitor Iscariot, as a particular injunction to them, and not as a general rule for the world at large ; though it has been very properly adjudged that what was good for the apostles to do, is equally wise and good for us, on the authority of Christ, to follow. And hence the observance of it has been continued and preserved in our Church as a commemorative ordinance, or a blessed remembrance of Christ's love and goodness towards us in his adventurous undertakings, and unmerited sufferings, on our account. But the end and meaning of the institution

are misunderstood and mistaken, if any superstitious feelings be awakened, and any causeless alarm be entertained. It is a blessed ordinance, and it should draw all men towards it with the cords of love, and with the glowing emotions of a grateful and affectionate heart. There, indeed, is Christ present to witness the approach of our persons, and to receive the records of our love, as we trust he has this day, to our great and endless comfort ; but not more present, nor in a manner otherwise different, than at any other ordinance of religion, public or private : for at all our services, after a spiritual manner, he is at hand ; himself having declared, and this is all-satisfactory on the subject, “ Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

You have now heard the passage ; you have searched the Scriptures, and it is now asked whether, by the test to which the doctrine has been subjected, there is any thing to give it sanction and authority ; in a word, whether it be not as revolting to reason as it is contrary to Scripture ? Were it consistent with the brevity with which, in an exercise of this kind, I am necessarily obliged to conduct my notices of the leading doctrines of the Romish communion, it would be a very easy matter for me to prove that the fathers of the Christian Church are all opposed to this dogma in particular, and from the writings of Beda, Ambrose, Augustin, Isidore, Jerome, Fulgentius, and others, shew that they viewed the words of Christ precisely in

the same light in which they are regarded by the members of our own communion. Isidore remarks that sacraments are so called because, under the veil and coverture of bodily things, God's divine power and virtue doth secretly work the efficacy or power of the said sacrament, and teach us to discern the Lord's body in the sacrament from the natural body* :” and as to his presence, all the fathers concur in representing that Christ is present—not corporeally, or carnally, or naturally ; but, as in a sacrament, by his Spirit, and with his grace. The conclusion, therefore, to which we come is this : that, as the doctrine has not the authority of the Scriptures to sanction it, and as it is equally against the enlightened judgment of the best and wisest interpreters, and against the common sense of mankind, it is to be repudiated, and to be considered, in the language of one of our articles, as overthrowing the nature of a sacrament, and giving occasion to many superstitions.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the next dogma of the Romish communion which I shall subject to the test of the Scriptures. The word *mass* is derived from the Latin word *missa*, and is employed to distinguish the whole service of the Roman communion. In looking into, and in searching the Scriptures, no such word occurs ; nor would the occurrence of such a term be considered

* *Isidor. Origin. Lib. 6.* Isidore was a man of extraordinary learning and sanctity, and may be regarded, with a few exceptions, as one of the best interpreters of the Scriptures.

as of the slightest importance, if employed only to signify or designate the public and general service of any particular Church. It is not, therefore, to the *use* of the term that any objection is raised, but to the abuse of which it was made the panderer and instrument. When, however, the mass—a word which was never introduced till four or five centuries after the birth of Christ, and is to be found in none of the writings of the Greek or Latin fathers within the period above mentioned—when it is represented as a *sacrifice*, we demur, and are prepared to prove by the Scriptures that there is but *one* sacrifice in which we are authorised to believe—the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, who was the Lamb slain once, and once only, to take away the sins of the whole world, and that *that*, and no other, is the sacrifice which can be instrumental to man's salvation. No human agent has the slightest power on earth to forgive sin, or to use any mass or service as a sacrifice for the atonement and absolution of the people. It is the Son of Man only that hath power to forgive sin, and it is only through the sacrifice of his death, which we commemorate in the Eucharist, that an acceptable mass or service can be performed, and a plenary absolution be obtained.

To effect this blessed consummation, no human agency, as I have said, is of the slightest avail: the sacrifice, and nought but the sacrifice, of the death of Jesus Christ, once, and only once offered, has been

made, "to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It was in an age in which superstition and darkness sat brooding over the Christian Church, in the eighth century, that the custom of what are called private masses was introduced ; and being found a productive source of revenue and influence to the priesthood, was pertinaciously maintained through succeeding centuries, and has been continued to the present moment, without one single passage of the Scriptures to prove its authority and to justify its retention. The administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was every where embellished, or rather deformed, with a variety of senseless fopperies, which destroyed the beautiful simplicity of that affecting and salutary institution ;* and at the private masses performed, an authority was assumed by the priests of receiving the confessions, and conferring absolution for the sins, of such as attended their private or public masses. The doctrine was this : that it was absolutely necessary for a sinner to make auricular confession to, and be absolved by, these priests, though God hath nowhere said so ; but it is not necessary for him to be contrite or to repent of his sins, out of love to God, though God himself, in his own Word, hath a hundred times said it is. Why must a solitary mass, bought for a piece of money, performed and participated by a priest alone, in a private corner of a

* See Mosheim, vol. ii. p. 270, and Bull's Sermons.

church, be, not only against the sense of Scripture and the primitive church, but also against common sense and grammar, called a communion, and be accounted useful to him that buys it, though he never himself receive the Sacrament, or but once a year, but for this reason, that there is great gain, but no godliness at all, in this doctrine? Why in the public eucharists must the priest only receive in both kinds, and the people be put off with a piece of a sacrament, against the plainest texts of Scripture and the practice of the then church for at least a thousand years after Christ (as some of the Romanists themselves have confessed), but that this tends to the advancement of the honour and estimation of the priest, as being alone qualified to offer up an entire sacrifice of Christ's body and blood? The representation that the real body and blood of *Christ* are sacrificed at each communion, and that when the host is carried about for the sick and dying, the real body and blood of Christ are uplifted, is manifestly unauthorized by anything to be found in the Scriptures, and therefore not to be entertained, unless, indeed, by such as have put equally at defiance the sanction of the written Word and the dictates of common sense. A church which promulgates such a dogma as that it can create a God at each communion, and therefore is above all kings, and nations, and people, has lost all claim to infallibility; and by this very act of perverting a plain injunction of the Scriptures, justifies us in

withdrawing from her communion and in *protesting* against such an abomination.

The doctrine of the Romish Communion upon which I shall next touch is the *Adoration of Images*. Now upon this subject I have referred, as I have before done with respect to my other notices of the Romish dogmas, to the Scriptures, for the purpose of discovering whether there be a single text or passage to authorize such adoration or worship. I have searched the Scriptures ; and the result of my scrutiny is, that, out of about a hundred and sixty passages in which the word *image*, or its synonymous word *idol*, occurs, there is not one verse or passage which gives the slightest sanction to this doctrine of the Romish communion ; and I will further add, that in all in which image-worship is mentioned, it receives from the written Word an express and implicit prohibition. Indeed, it may be said, with the most perfect regard to truth, that if there be any one point on which the Divine mind is more sensitive than another, if I may so express myself, or, in other words, the Almighty is more particularly jealous, it is on this very practice : for this, perhaps, among other reasons that might be alleged, on account of the proneness and liability of the human mind to be betrayed into the commission of this idolatrous act ; for it may be remarked, that the Greek word *ειδωλον*, translated in the Septuagint from the Hebrew one *צלם*, image, signifies also an idol. It expresses and means one and the same thing in the Scriptures. They, there-

fore, who prostrate themselves before an image, do, in strictness of speech, bow themselves down and proffer homage to an idol. They justly expose themselves to the charge of being the worshippers of idols.

Now I have remarked that the passages are numerous in which such adoration is prohibited, and such profanation is condemned in language, too, than which nothing can be imagined more direct and emphatic. Such passages must be familiar to those who are in the habit of perusing the Scriptures, or of hearing them read. It will, therefore, be but a waste of time to transfer them from the written Word into this sermon. But there is one which it is quite impossible that I should omit to quote, because, in my mind, it is decisive on the point, as it must be, I apprehend, in the judgment of all who are prepared to receive the Bible as the only authorized standard of the revelation of the will and pleasure of Almighty God. I believe it will be conceded by the members of *all* religious communities, that, if there be any of the precepts and commandments in the written Word which, considering the awful circumstances under which they were promulgated, are, I will not say of more, but of *most* important signification, they are those which are contained in the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments. Commandments they are, all of which are obligatory on the conscience and practice of religious communities, however diversified their modes of worship and their forms of discipline. They teach, *first*, the duties we owe to God

and, secondly, the duties we owe the one to the other. The four first of the commandments are termed those of the first table, because they refer exclusively to the Supreme Being, and these are of such commanding weight and consequence as must quite disqualify any man from having the slightest claim to his being regarded as a religious being, if he lives either in the occasional evasion or habitual infringement of any one of them. With those only which refer to the first table am I concerned at the present moment, and of them only with the two first. And what are they? What do we read? If any thing hath power to inspire awe and arrest attention, it surely must be the words with which they are introduced to our notice. What voice do we hear? That of men? No; the voice of Omnipotence itself. "God spake these words"—(Let all, then, stand in awe, and hear and obey what He saith.)—"God spake these words, and said, I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods but me. Thou shalt not make to thyself any *graven image*, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them; for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shew mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

And such is the commandment, and such are the

jealousy and hatred expressed. Against whom ? Can a question be mooted, or a doubt be harboured, against whom that jealousy is enkindled and that hatred is directed ? If words, then, have meaning, if language hath force, it is as clear as truth, in all her majestic splendour and simplicity, that from this one passage (and, for brevity's sake, I omit the curses and denunciations contained in others), I say, from this one passage, all who gaze upon, and bow down and offer incense to, and worship images and idols, carved and manufactured by artificers, and therefore the works and creatures of men's hands, and set them up in the secret corners of the temple, or in the public courts of the sanctuary*, have the curse and condemnation of a jealous and a wrathful God upon them : yea, whether those images be representations of Himself, whom no eye hath seen, and no hand therefore can carve ; or whether they be pictures of the Godhead embodied in the person of Him who once was his express pattern on earth, and now is man's Mediator *alone* in heaven ; or whether those images are manufactured to represent one—honourable indeed, among women, the mother of an incarnate God—once, indeed, an instrument of marvellous agency, but that agency having been fulfilled in the mighty scheme of human redemption, her star at once set on earth, and now only shines forth within the celestial hemis-

* Augustin remarks, *Simulachra nefas est in Christiano templo collocare.*

phere, as one of magnitude, indeed, but to be worshipped and adored no more* than any thing besides that is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or whether they be images of saints, or relics of martyrs, or the wood of the cross, or the bones of the dead, or rosaries, or crucifixes, abused to the purposes of superstition and idolatry, I call forth the page of the written Word to attest, that they are all among the accursed things ; that the only object of human adoration is Heaven's God, who alone is cognizant of what nor angel, nor saint, nor the Virgin Mary, can or does know, human want and human guilt, and who, if he needs any propitiation to be made, or any intercession to be offered, is satisfied to accept those only of the Mediator between God and man, the God-propitiator, and the man protector, Jesus Christ, who is "now sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, ever living to make intercession for us," and is constituted the "*one* mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ."

And then, if this be the doctrine of the Scriptures, what becomes of that other dogma of the Romish communion, viz., the *Invocation of Saints*, or, in other words, saint-worship ? As the result of an investigation of the Scriptures has proved that there is no manner of authority to justify image-worship, so,

* Epiphanius observes, *Et si pulcherrima est Maria, et sancta, et honorata, at non ad adorationem.*

if we search throughout the numerous passages of the Word of God, we shall not find a single verse or portion of the written Word from which any inference can be drawn that prayers to angels should be addressed, or the intercession of saints are required. We read of their employment, indeed, in heaven ; but as to any communion with, or knowledge of us on earth, the Scriptures are silent ; and it is quite impossible for us to advance any thing for certain on such a subject, so far removed from human apprehension and human judgement. But this we may say, without hazarding a hasty and dangerous speculation, that all their occupations are of a heavenly nature, and that all their thoughts are so absorbed by doing God's will, as to leave them not a moment's leisure for earthly concerns, even supposing their knowledge extended beyond the confines of the heavenly mansions, or that they knew aught of what was transacted in a world with which death had dissolved their connexion and intercourse. From what we can collect of the heavenly world we image it to ourselves as a region of consummate blessedness ; but it may well admit of a question, whether such a representation would be just, whether the blessedness of angel spirits would be consummate and unalloyed, were they to have cognizance of all that is passing in this lower region. Delightful it is, in one sense, to entertain such an idea, that all communion between the saints and us has not been abrogated by death ; and sweetly soothing as it is

to the spirit bowed down to the earth by some family bereavement, and mourning for some dear and valued member of the domestic circle, to believe that the intercourse is still continued, yet it is too much to conceive of them that they would know their duty so little, and wax in their attachment to their Redeemer so languidly, as to interpose their prayers and services in that department which has been so exclusively consigned to him, that of being the *one only* Mediator between God and man, whose mediation is our all in all, to which we can alone trust for having our prayers heard, our persons accepted, our services received, and our offences pardoned. They surely would not be so little sensible of what they themselves owed to the same mediation, as officiously to assume the office of mediator, and trench upon the department of the one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus. We conceive not so of these tried and blessed spirits; nor that had they the knowledge of what is passing here, would they be so unwise as to press a suit which is in far better hands when advanced by Him who hath been retained from on high as our counsel to advocate our cause and propitiate our services*.

* It was, perhaps, a good ordinance of one of the ancient churches, seeing the purposes to which images and pictures in churches would be abused: "Placuit in Ecclesiis esse non debere, ne, quod colitur aut adoratur, in parietibus depingatur."

But we need not dwell on such suppositions—the whole stream of Scripture flows contrary to such a doctrine as that of the invocation of the saints or angels. The doctrine of the Scriptures is this, and no other, that all prayer must be addressed to God in the name and through the mediation of Jesus Christ—that the interposition of none other but that of Him is required—that the service of no angels, or saints, or of the blessed Virgin, are requisite—that no other advocate but Christ is necessary—that, in short, if any man sin—and this is the doctrine of cardinal importance and blessing to sinners—“if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins!” And here the doctrine must rest on this pivot, and on this alone. Whatever men may advance, and churches may ordain, the pious and judicious believer, who is instructed in things pertaining to the kingdom of God *out of the Scriptures*, will here repose on this rock his confidence and faith, nor suffer them to be shaken therefrom by any plausible theories, or unauthorized interpolations of God’s blessed Word. In apostolical language, then, I say to one and all of you, “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, or senseless prostration of the body to images and pictures, and *worshipping of angels*, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which, all the body by joints and bands having

nourishment, ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God !”* You will perceive from this passage—and the authority of St. Paul is not one to be lightly esteemed—that the worshipping of angels even, who are a higher order of celestial beings, and ordained to minister in holier things, even to do service before the presence, and to attend at the altar of the Lord Jehovah in heaven, is prohibited. Who the angels are is a question to which no other answer can be given but such as is authorized by the written word ; and the intimations respecting them are so slight, that it requires the reins of a sound and sober judgment, when we expatiate upon their nature, and describe their offices. In all probability they were created at the time, and within the period, in which the Almighty was engaged in constructing this fabric, and in completing this world of ours ; and, at different periods since their creation, have they been employed as harbingers of peace, or as executioners of justice—and even at this moment their ministry is exercised, in a marvellous, but sufficiently intelligible manner, to give consolation and succour to the heirs of salvation,

* It is the judicious remark of Dr. Clark, that the earthly relations, and even the mother of our Lord herself, were constantly so treated by him after such a manner as to repel the idea that they were capable of *doing*, or *suffering*, or *interceding*, any way *meritoriously* for us, as if it were on *purpose* to guard against those gross superstitions which our Lord foresaw would prevail in the latter ages of the Church.

as they are winding their way among the vales, and ascending the hills of this lower world, in which their *guidance* is so necessary to keep all of us from the briars and thistles which encumber our path, and their *might* is so indispensable to countervail the various mines which the malice of the devil and the hand of mischief have fabricated at every turn of our pathway heavenwards. And, oh! who can doubt but that it is to the ministry of a holy angel that the traveller heavenwards owes much of his guardianship by night, and of his preservation by day—much of the good thoughts he entertains, the good resolutions he forms, and many of the known and the *unknown* dangers from which he has been rescued. There is no man exercised in the ways of religion, but must have observed, that oftentimes on a sudden, he knows not how, most vigorous, powerful, affecting thoughts of eternity, and the great concerns of religion, have seized and possessed his soul; such affecting thoughts, as at other times, when he composes and sets himself to think of those matters, he cannot, without very great difficulty, if at all, command and retrieve.

But not to dwell on this delightful speculation, nothing can be proved from the ministry and employment of angelic beings with ourselves in serving God, that worship should be paid to these superior intelligences. And if not to them, assuredly not to others, who are called saints in the Roman calendar, and still less to the dead, who have been canonized as saints;

to whom invocation should be made, and intercession offered. Dead? Yes, indeed, as death left, so judgment will find them; and if any canonization will happily take place respecting them, that must be adjudicated only at the judgment-day; for the Great Judge is not the Judge of the quick only, but of the dead; and if *any* of the dead now wear the crown, and have received the kingdom, methinks, much of the duties of the Judge will be, and have been, abridged, and he will be the Judge of the living only, or of such as shall be found alive at his second coming to judge the whole world. I cannot but think, that it is an error in doctrine to suppose that even the good receive their reward, when the mortal struggle with flesh and blood has terminated. It is cheering to the heart to people heaven with such as we loved and honoured on earth. But it is an assumption which is shivered to atoms, when we reflect, in the cooler exercise of the judgment, and when the paroxysms of grief have subsided, that thus to people heaven with the objects of our endearment and veneration, is somewhat, and greatly too, to trench on the Judge's province, who alone can arbitrate in such a matter without partiality, and with justice tempered with mercy, and to whom, in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge *both the quick and dead*, we pray that we may rise to the life immortal, through Him, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever!

From the above reflections, then, and more particu-

larly from the Scriptures, you will perceive that saint-worship has no authority by which it can be justified.

To the worship and reverence with which the memories of departed saints were regarded, are owing many of the corruptions that grew up in the Church, and a “train of error and fraud ensued, which ended in the grossest creature-worship.” Yet, in its origin, this was natural and salutary. He, whose heart is not excited upon a spot which a martyr has sanctified by his sufferings, or at the grave of one who has largely benefited mankind, must be more inferior to the multitude in the moral, than he can possibly be raised above them in his intellectual, nature. Could the Holy Land be swept clean of its mummeries and superstitions, the thoughts and emotions to be experienced there would be worth a pilgrimage. But it is the condition of humanity, that the best things are those which should most easily be abused. The prayer which was preferred with increased fervency at a martyr’s grave, was at length addressed to the martyr himself; virtue was imputed to the remains of his body, the rags of his apparel, even to the instruments of his suffering; relics were required as an essential part of the church furniture; it was decreed that no church should be erected unless some treasures of this kind were deposited within the altar, and so secured there that they could not be taken out without destroying it; it was made a part of the service to pray through the merits of the saint whose relics were there deposited,

and the priest, when he came to this passage, was enjoined to kiss the altar.*

But upon the various abuses to which it gave occasion it is not a pleasing, nor a necessary part of my office at present, to enlarge ; and here with one notice of this practice, to which the Romish communion hath given sanction and countenance, at a very early epoch of the Christian church, I shall draw to a close a discourse which has been extended to a length much greater than I originally designed ; though there are yet some other dogmas of the Papists which I intended to subject to the test of the Scriptures, and respecting which I have no difficulty whatsoever in saying, they might very easily be proved to have no sanction from the Scriptures to be received as articles of a sound and orthodox Christian church. They are *Purgatory, Justification by Works, the Refusal of the consecrated wine to the Laity*, and some others of a less consequential nature, and which being not essential to salvation, it is indifferent whether they are observed or not, such as the signing of the cross, &c. : they only become reprehensible when *abused*, or are made to minister to superstition, or are considered as *meritorious* in God's sight, or supersede the performance of the more plain and practical duties of the Divine law. In conducting my examination I have endeavoured to avoid all intemperate expressions, and all exasperating language ;

* See Southey's admirable work, " The Book of the Church."

and simply to place in juxta-position the tenets held by the Romish church, and the words expressed in the Holy Scriptures; and I trust you will now be able to judge for yourselves on which side the truth lies, and to make your election accordingly. If on the side of the Bible, yield to it the whole assent of the understanding—give to it the whole affections of the heart, and let it be your ambition—the noblest that can warm and animate your bosoms—to *live* by it as a rule of life and doctrine, and become, not so much good Protestants as good Christians. For we know that there has been made much abuse of that term *good*, and that it is frequently employed as one expressive more of the zeal and bigotry of a sectarian, than of the piety and consistency which should mark and adorn the whole of the temper and conduct of the Christian.

From the historical account which I have given of the primary translation of the Scriptures into the English tongue, and from the reflections in which I have indulged as to the advantages, which it is impossible to estimate too highly, resulting from their translation, from which myriads and myriads of our forefathers derived, and thousands and tens of thousands amongst us are now deriving, all that can impart comfort, encouragement, and support in the pathway to heaven—in travail and trial, in gloom and solitude, in sunshine and light, in clouds and darkness, then am I satisfied that you will concur with me in the conclusion, that the day on which we were so privileged and so blessed should be

a day of most joyful remembrance, and held in veneration and gratitude in this and in every other generation ; and that the fourth day of October, not only on this its third centenary, but that ever in each succeeding year it should be commemorated as the first red-letter day of a consistent Protestant ! Frequent commemorations of national blessings are due in gratitude ; and frequent reviews of a national constitution are necessary in prudence. For these purposes, the deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage, and the plan of the Mosaical institutions, were commanded to be read over to the people every seventh year, in the year of release, that they might hear and learn to fear the Lord as long as they lived in the land, whither they went over Jordan to possess it. And it would certainly be dangerous in us to lose sight of the errors and slavery from which we have been delivered, or the truths and liberty to which we have been restored. The human mind is so framed that it cannot long support itself without something of religion to rest upon ; and if no public care is taken to instruct it in a reasonable one, it will lay hold on any delusion that the first impostor shall recommend. Our licentiousness has already driven multitudes into enthusiasm ; and a conscience plunged into guilt may as readily catch at popery itself. We seem indeed but little apprehensive of danger from that quarter at present ; yet the converts from our Church to *popery* are notoriously increasing. The mine, not attended to, is more dangerous than the

unmasked battery, which, while it threatens, puts us on our guard ; and experience convinces us that nominal professors, when unprincipled, may fly for shelter into the very jaws of that superstition which we have *thrice* happily escaped, from a religion to whose power and beauty they were entirely strangers.*

It is a just reflection, that “ we often grow insensible of our blessings, merely from the long and uninterrupted possession of them. And this insensibility usually makes us careless of preserving them, till we are again taught to judge of their value by their loss. Something of this kind, it is to be feared, is our own case at present with regard to the Reformation. We have *possessed* that blessing so long that we have forgot to *enjoy* it. Ignorant of the servitude under which our fathers groaned, we know not how to relish our own deliverance : the deformities of a superstition three hundred years ago are so far out of sight, as to make us less attentive to the beauties of a reasonable service. By these means we not only reap less pleasure than we might, and produce less fruit than we ought ; but we grow less apprehensive of the tyranny that watches to enslave us, and less zealous to maintain that liberty which our ancestors sacrificed their lives to purchase for us.” In the truth and justice of these reflections who will not acquiesce, and see in them additional reason for the pious commemoration of this day, and to let it

* See “ Ridley’s Life of Ridley.”

be a kind of gracious remembrancer to stir us up to continued vigilance and wakefulness, lest we should see wrested from us that reasonable service, the maintenance of which, in all its original purity and excellence, forms the firmest rampart against infidelity, is the surest bulwark of the throne, the best defence of liberty, and the most impregnable support to pure and undefiled religion? “Be watchful, then, Protestants! strengthen, then, Christians! the things which remain. Remember how you have received and heard, and hold fast and repent.” Amen.

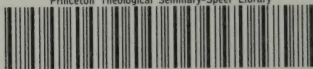
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